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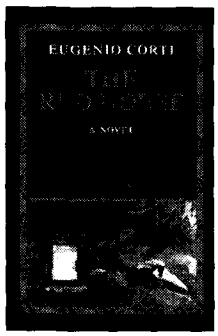

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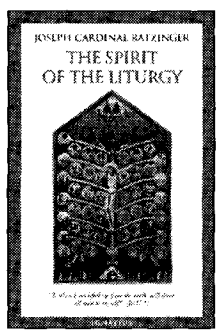

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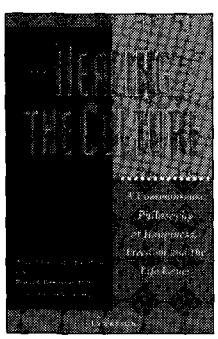

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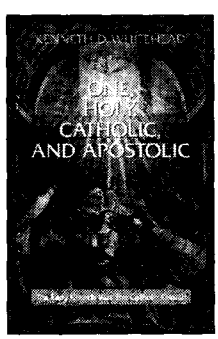

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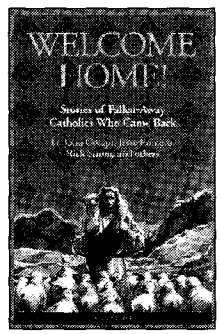

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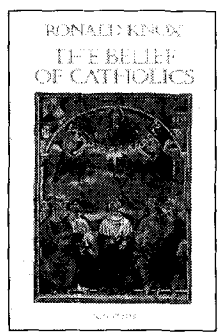

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The Dangers of *Dickerson*

In "The Supreme Court 2000: A Symposium" (October 2000), your six contributors recount the damage recently done by the Court to innocent life, to the Court itself, and to the nation. Each writer in turn describes another peak in the mountain range of error by which we now are almost surrounded.

Yet one of the Supreme Court's June 2000 decisions goes unmentioned, and its potential for wreaking havoc should not escape our watch. Viewed as a criminal law decision, *Dickerson v. United States* is unremarkable. Given the chance to curtail or overrule *Miranda v. Arizona*, the Court opted for no change. Before *Dickerson*, we had *Miranda* warnings, and we have them still. So what? But *Dickerson* is also a decision regarding constitutional law—a decision of colossal importance to, say, a member of Congress who imagines that partial-birth abortion can be made illegal by a statute of the sort seemingly invited by the Court in *Stenberg v. Carhart*. Sorry, Charlie.

We learn in *Dickerson* that the powers of Congress are limited in a way not previously imagined. We discover that a rule invented by the Supreme Court for the putative purpose of enforcing constitutional rights is immune to congressional limitation or modification. It is a "constitutional decision," a category now indistinguishable from the Constitution itself. Justice Antonin Scalia offered in dissent the view that *Dickerson* "converts *Miranda* from a milestone of judicial overreaching into the very Cheops Pyramid (or perhaps the Sphinx would be a better analogue) of judicial arrogance." With all respect to our era's Great Dissenter, it is *Dickerson*, not *Miranda*, that now must be feared. We should expect that the next time Congress attempts to honor the will of the people by legislating some minor restriction on abortion, *Dickerson* will be invoked to strike it down. *Roe v. Wade* or *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* will be awarded the title "constitutional decision" as protection against congressional oversight of the Court's favorite right.

Michael Murray
Mason, Michigan

From Manhattan to Boston

In Ronald Herzman's account of the Manhattan College of his time and the Boston College of his son's time ("Catholic Educations," October 2000), he says relatively little about religion at Manhattan, or about how the American Catholic academy got from the Manhattan of the sixties to the BC of the nineties. I was a year behind him in the Liberal Arts Program, and perhaps my recollections will help fill out the picture.

When I got to Manhattan College in 1962, practically everybody went to Mass, but practically nobody cared much about it. The secularization that everyone started talking about a few years later was already dominant among both the students and the faculty, although very few yet thought in those terms. Most of the Christian Brothers shied away from much personal contact with the students, because they sensed—and not infrequently shared—the students' half-conscious contempt for the mission epitomized in their official name, the Brothers of the Christian Schools. I believe that only one classmate of Professor Herzman's became a priest; none of mine did. One or two left Manhattan to enter the Brothers, but none of them stuck. I don't recall anyone saying a dozen words about Vatican II during

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my college years, even though it convened in the first semester of my freshman year and concluded in the first semester of my senior year. Nobody touted the excellent devotional and ascetic works that had been written or translated in the previous twenty or thirty years. Devotional life meant old ladies saying the rosary or attending novenas. The yearly retreat was a joke. We knew little and cared less. Some of the faculty presumably knew more; but either they didn't care any more than we did, or were too afraid of our scorn to talk about it.

In the theology department, most of the new lay teachers hired in the push for professionalization were seminary washouts whose professionalism consisted of a Master's degree, more or less informed enthusiasm for the current fads, and ignorance of and contempt for everything else—that is, for the Church's intellectual and devotional patrimony. As the fads got more heterodox, so did they.

I majored in philosophy, and it was much the same story. The department consisted mostly of lay products of Fordham's graduate philosophy department, the most popular of whom shared their teachers' (and their students') hunger for secular intellectual respectability. Ironically enough, the only figure in Fordham philosophy with any claim to big-league status, Dietrich von Hildebrand, was far too Catholic for serious consideration; he was only good enough for women and nuns. We all knew better than Augustine and Anselm and Aquinas, not to mention the twentieth-century figures like Maritain and Gilson and Marcel who'd had so little sophistication as to take on philosophy from a Catholic perspective.

The Liberal Arts Program was everything that Prof. Herzman says of it and more. It's still a matter of wonderment to me how much I got to learn by comparison with friends, grad school and law school classmates, and colleagues who were condemned to pass their undergraduate years in places like Harvard and Yale. But a necessary condition of the Program's existence was a certain reverence and docility rooted in traditional Catholic sensibility and ultimately in the Catholic faith. That reverence and docility still existed in the early and middle sixties despite the atmosphere described above; but it was mostly vestigial and inertial. The secular spirit just kept expanding its influence, and ultimately those administrators, faculty, and students who couldn't comprehend liberal education as meaning anything but taking the courses you damn well felt like taking (outside your major, of course) killed off the Program.

So there wasn't much left of the Catholic spirit at Manhattan College when the explosion sparked by publication of *Humanae Vitae* finished off the old regime. Emboldened by the laity's anger at Paul VI's attack on the sacred right to kid-free copulation, the Catholic academy and ecclesiastical bureaucracy rose up, bullied the terror-stricken episcopate into complicity or silence, and took over. By the time Prof. Herzman's son started at Boston College, the new regime had been in full operation for better than twenty years. Manhattan, which was run by an order without much intellectual prestige and had an almost entirely lay faculty, did not bother with the self-congratulation with which the Jesuit colleges or Notre Dame celebrated their defection. It simply followed its betters.

John A. McFarland
Ellicott City, Maryland

How to Sing Unto the Lord

I was delighted to see Father Richard John Neuhaus ("Singing the Lord's Songs," October 2000) going for the jugular of a beast that I think all Christian churches are going to have to face down before it does us grave damage—contemporary church music.

Born and raised a Southern Baptist in northern Missouri, I was recruited into the church choir in 1936, almost at the very moment when my voice had gone from soprano to youthful bass. My mother, rest her fun-loving, devoutly Christian soul, was organist and choir director, and she provided us with anthems published by the Lorenz Company. In those quarterlies Ellen Jane Lorenz took anthems by the great old masters and simplified them so that your run-of-the-mill volunteer choir could handle them. But in fact her simplified versions were much more difficult to sing than the originals, because although the harmonies and melodies in anthems by the great composers might often take surprising turns, they never took turns that were puzzling or illogical or impossible to sing, even for relatively untrained volunteer choirs. After many years mother discovered this fact, moved out of the Lorenz milieu, and the choir blessed her for it and sang good music, sometimes not very well, but always with joy.

My career in government has taken me and my family to a variety of locations, and I have listened to choirs in a number of churches both in the U.S. and abroad. As the years passed all these choirs have concentrated more and more on contemporary composers, who, with a few notable exceptions such as John Rutter, have yet to produce music that can compare with that of Haydn, or Bach, or Palestrina, or any of the other greats of the distant past. Moreover, I think one could select, say, twelve of the great anthems of all time and sing them one by one, over and over again, without ever tiring or boring a congregation. As it is, choirs these days sing a brand new and immensely forgettable anthem every Sunday morning.

I have on occasion made a pest of myself by railing at choir directors who refuse to bring out the great old

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anthems that are in our libraries, and instead of "Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming" prepare things like "What's Your Question, Lord?" sung to a sort of calypso beat. The response to my complaints is almost invariably that "we have to give the congregation the type of music it wants to hear." (Woe to the pastor who approaches his duties with that kind of attitude.) Well, whereas one might drive home with the strains of "The Heav'ns Are Telling" still resonating in the heart, it is difficult to imagine singing "What's Your Question, Lord?" while waiting for a traffic light to change.

What happens, in fact, is that when the choir has sung the last note of "What's Your Question, Lord?" the congregation doesn't sit in reverent silence, moved by music and text, but instead bursts into applause for a rollicking performance. I think applause in a church service is an abomination, and am deeply dismayed to see that the practice is spreading throughout many denominations, including the Catholic Church. It says something disturbing about what the people seem to be seeking. God is in His Heaven and I'm enjoying the heck out of Him.

John R. Cassidy
Plantation, Florida

As we search for a church after a recent move it is impossible not to resonate with elements of Richard John Neuhaus' most recent harangue against the simultaneous excesses and shortcomings of much contemporary church music. If historian Nathan Hatch is to be believed, however, the "worship wars" in American Christianity are at least two hundred years old, and suggest a rather direct link between the political democracy that Father Neuhaus so eloquently champions and various manifestations of an accompanying "cultural democracy" for which he seems to have little patience. The ideal that church should serve as an occasion for literary and aesthetic uplift for people of "lower" tastes did not long survive the revolution, and continues to fight an uphill battle against those who prefer to worship in the vernacular. Why should it be surprising that, in our democratic society, people would develop a church music that is simple, visceral, often defiant, and geared toward self-expression? Can the leveling instincts behind such cultural expressions really be separated from the ethos that created and sustains political democracy?

Steven Jensen
Canton, Ohio

I fear that Richard John Neuhaus, in his thunderings against the state of contemporary church music, has yet to learn the basic lesson of "the perfect shoe." In vain have I long searched for the perfect shoe: good for town and country, durable at sporting events and well-turned out at the country club soirée. It is only with reluctance and the dawn of middle age that I have come to accept this lesson: it does not exist. As with shoes, so with worship styles: it takes all kinds.

I too like classical music, but I will never surrender my shrieks of "Jeeesus" set to the thunderings of a rock anthem. Let Nietzsche explain: he made a useful distinction in pointing out that the Greeks made room for both the Apollonian element—classical, measured, balanced, reasoned—and the Dionysian—abandoned, instinctual, romantic. A church given over only to the Apollonian, as Father Neuhaus urges, would be measured, balanced, beautiful . . . and a dull thing indeed.

Taking another angle, we could say that Fr. Neuhaus is altogether too Jamesian and insufficiently Chestertonian or Bellocian. I think here of Henry James' visit to G. K. Chesterton with Belloc attendant, disheveled from having just come in from a long trip. Chesterton observed: "Henry James had a name for being subtle; but I think that situation was too subtle for him. I doubt to this day whether he, of all men, did not miss the irony of the best comedy in which he ever played a part. He left America because he loved Europe, and all that was meant by England or France; the gentry, the gallantry, the traditions of lineage and locality, the life that had been lived beneath the old portraits in oak-panelled rooms. And there, on the other side of the tea-table, was Europe, was the old thing that made France and England, the posterity of the English squires and the French soldiers; ragged, unshaven, shouting for beer, shameless above all shades of poverty and wealth; sprawling, indifferent, secure. And what looked across at it was still the Puritan refinement of Boston; and the space it looked across was wider than the Atlantic."

If the Greeks don't convince, and if Nietzsche in tandem with Chesterton fails to persuade, perhaps it would not go amiss to recall that when David's wife Michal "saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she despised him in her heart" (2 Samuel 6:16), and she did so in the name of refinement, good taste, and "behavior appropriate to one's station." She was Apollonian all the way, but she was wrong.

I write all this only because I am convinced that Fr. Neuhaus has much to offer us evangelicals and charismatics, but to despise us for our worship styles is to build walls where bridges are necessary; moreover, it is to build walls over microscopic issues of personal taste. Why magnify an issue of personal taste into a theological issue of cosmic proportions as he does when he tags the rock style of worship as "personal poison"?

I am sure he must feel better, bolstered by the notion that his tastes are anchored in deep theological undercurrents unlike these shallow other fellows, but to give way to this feel-

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ing is to give way to the very self-indulgence he condemns in the music of others.

Paul M. Miller
Bellevue, Washington

RJN replies:
I stand reproached by Mr. Miller but not, I think, corrected. Neither Apollo nor Dionysus is a model for Christian worship, and Belloc did not sprawl in church. Distinctions are difficult in practice, but the difference I was addressing is between the worship of God and emotional exhibitionism, between the musical offering of beauty honed by disciplined talent and the self-indulgent display of enthusiasm. While on Belloc, there is this lovely story which I'm told is true. At St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York he stood, as was the French custom, where the Americans knelt. An usher tugged his sleeve and whispered, "We kneel at this point, sir." Belloc to usher, "Go to hell." Usher to Belloc, "I'm sorry, sir, I didn't know you were a Catholic."

To Mr. Jensen: If by democratic one means attuned to and loved by the people, neither in Catholic nor evangelical worship is third-rate rock or Broadway music democratic. Recently I spoke to a gathering of several hundred evangelicals. The talk was preceded by a "song fest" in which piano, guitar, and exuberant song leader tried to get people to belt out something called, "Do You Know Jesus?" Unsuccessfully. The words were even projected on a big screen. All to no avail. Now, if they had tried "The King of Love, My Shepherd Is" or "A Mighty Fortress" or "O Worship the King," I expect there would have been some heartfelt singing. That's democratic.

I thank Mr. Cassidy for his corroborating comments.

Starr Proceedings?

I wish to offer a modest traditionalist response to the observations of Richard John Neuhaus regarding Special Prosecutor Kenneth Starr and the presidential impeachment of recent years (While We're At It, October 2000). One thing that most of us agree upon in situations like this is the usefulness of the centuries-old adage, "Stick with your principles and let the chips fall where they may." Some of us old fogies were, and remain, utterly appalled at the scandalous eighteen-month media riot that ended finally with the President's acquittal by the U.S. Senate. We do not find anything inspirational about this entire string of events. Available evidence will not sustain Mr. Starr's contention that the mandate of his office compelled him to act as he did. The truth is that he freely chose to migrate from his legitimate Whitewater assignment to the unseemly Paula Jones case.

True, his statutory jurisdiction was very broad, but much of it was discretionary. Subsequent developments would seem to confirm that Starr opted to move away from the Whitewater matter because the Jones affair offered the virtual certainty of media-plausible "pay dirt" as compared with the oblivion toward which he seemed to be headed in his initial investigation.

At the outset of this switch to the morals scandal, Starr had to know that Linda Tripp had committed a felony under Maryland law in surreptitiously taping Monica Lewinsky's phone conversations about her White House liaison with the President. The crass assault against the younger woman's character that accompanied this criminal conduct has to reflect as much upon Starr as it does upon Tripp. Surely one can ask in fairness, Would Archibald Cox have involved himself and his office in this tawdry kind of lawlessness?

Between the two of them Starr and Tripp were able to intimidate the hapless Monica and her family and attorneys into a slavish cooperation with the prosecution. And from

Wandering Toward the Altar

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there it took only minimal partisanship for Starr to appeal to the Republican congressional leadership for their cooperation. Once the impeachment process commenced, partisan Republicans and the media, not Starr, were in charge of events. We cannot lay on him the dishonest subterfuge of baiting the presidential perjury in order to have a formal basis for impeachment. For months impeachment managers and media pundits would episodically provide the viewing public earnest explanations that the President was on trial for lying under oath, not for his abominable conduct—and then recommence the extensive airing of the abominable conduct.

Mercifully for Mr. Starr, history will more likely forget him than judge him.

Robert E. Newton
Retsil, Washington

A Note on Yeats

According to Polybius
The sea route to Byzantium
Was fortunate in ways not clear
When looking at the map.
Across the Bosporus, Cyzicus
Seemed no less favored than its neighbor,
But its port was inaccessible
To boats sailing direct;
Voyagers from the Black Sea
Were swept by currents west and south
Into the harbor of Byzantium
Even when the wind held fair
For passage into Cyzicus.
A sailor from the south
Bound for Cyzicus from Greece
Or Syria was blown off course
By the prevailing winds
Directly to Byzantium.
In those times, one could not
Not sail to Byzantium.

Lawrence Wieder

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This Time

Whose Left?

James Nuechterlein

There's this friend of mine who's a liberal. For years now, he's been trying to persuade me that I (and conservatives in general) have a fundamentally skewed picture of the American political scene. We are wrong in particular, he thinks, about the state of the political left.

From his perspective, conservatives are caught in a kind of time warp. They don't see the present clearly because they are still focused on the past: they haven't, in short, gotten over the 1960s. Visions of a McGovernized liberalism dance in their heads—a liberalism that, in their view, caved in to radicalism when it wasn't simply indistinguishable from it. My friend thinks that what went on in the sixties is more complicated than that, but in any case, he insists, it has nothing to do with the present. Sure there are crazies on the left, he concedes, but they have next to no real influence. They are isolated in obscure corners of the academy where they carry on a pointless dialogue of the deaf.

In fact, my friend continues, the most interesting intellectual work going on today is among thinkers who are for the most part post-ideological and whose discourse cannot plausibly be made sense of under traditional categories of right and left. They know that Marx is dead and they have no interest in attempting to resurrect him. Similarly, they are largely indifferent to the radical feminists or postmodernists. They don't take the radicals on in pitched battle because they think any such conflicts would be neither interesting nor significant. The radicals get exaggerated attention paid to them, my friend thinks, largely because conservatives are so noisily frightened of them. If conservatives would calm down, he says, they would see that radicalism is not at all the looming danger they suppose it to be.

I don't simply dismiss my friend's arguments out of hand. He's right to note that some conservatives sometimes talk as if this were still, say, 1968, and that this intellectual time lag can result in distorted political judgments. I remember a dinner conversation a while back at a conservative gathering where my three table partners, all of them intelligent and learned scholars, could not understand my failure to agree with them that Bill Clinton is, at heart, a socialist. Bill Clinton is, in my view, many dubious things—but a socialist? I frequently find myself arguing with fellow conservatives—usually to little effect—that things have changed a lot since the sixties, more of them in our favor than most on the right, for whatever reason, want to acknowledge.

It is also the case that intellectual life is less obsessively politicized than it was in the sixties and seventies. To put it in shorthand terms, compare the *New York Review of Books* then and now. You don't these days find diagrams for Molotov cocktails on *NYRB*'s cover, and the prose inside is correspondingly less febrile than it used to be. The political articles are not nearly so over the top as they once were, and there are many more articles today that aren't about politics at all.

But I can't in the end accept my friend's "beyondist"—as in beyond left and right—argument. I was reminded why by a recent piece in the *New Republic* by Senior Editor John B. Judis ("Bad Trip," November 13, 2000). Back in the sixties and early seventies, Judis was a radical, a founding member of the socialist New American Movement. But he came to realize, as he puts it, that "I inhabited a political universe that bore no relation to American reality." So he gave up on socialism, though he still considers himself "part of the broader labor and Democratic Party left."

Just before the election, Judis was invited to participate in a conference in New York City on globalization and independent politics, and the experience provided a flashback to his days as a radical. The conference, he reports, overflowed with hysterical rhetoric about the desperate state of American politics and its endemic racism, sexism, and neo-imperialism. Judis says of the panel discussion he moderated, "All in all, you could have held a more intelligent and respectful discussion of American politics and society in the sitting room of your local mental hospital." Of the conference in general, he concludes that for the most part "reality was not on the agenda."

Now my friend would insist that Judis' experience at the conference proves nothing about the general state of the American left; it merely confirms that, as has always been the case, you will find a lot of flaky characters on the fringes of academia. But this was not necessarily a fringe occasion. The conference's sponsors included, in addition to the Nation Institute, the Carnegie Foundation, Barnard College, Columbia University, the City University of New York (CUNY), and George Soros' Open Society Institute. That's more like the establishment than the fringe. And Judis reports that among the five hundred attendees he noted "quite a few well-known academics and activists."

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For Judis, the conference revealed that there are "two American lefts," and that they inhabit different worlds. "The reformist, democratic left of the AFL-CIO, the Sierra Club, Public Citizen, NOW, the ACLU, and the NAACP is not moribund; in fact, it may even be on the rebound. But the cultural left, housed in universities like Duke, CUNY, and UC Santa Cruz, still lives, amazingly, in the bygone world of capitalist pigs, power to the people, and Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh."

That last may be somewhat exaggerated, but it seems clear that there aren't a lot of beyondists in Judis' "cultural left." Indeed, many of his "reformists"—leaders of NOW, the ACLU, and the NAACP—could themselves not unjustly be characterized as radicals. They aren't headed for the barricades, but the rhetoric they employ and the proposals they put forward are considerably more militant than, say, the platform of the Democratic Party.

Be that as it may, I'm convinced that what Judis encountered at the conference in New York is far more prevalent in the intellectual world than my friend wants to admit. And intellectuals, as we all know, have influence over public opinion vastly disproportionate to their incidence in the population. Remember the years between the two World Wars: there were not many actual Marxists in America, but the Marxist influence was everywhere.

My friend dreams of a new End of Ideology, and I can readily join him in wishing for its advent. It would be a great blessing if the nation could once again establish the broad consensus on issues of politics, economics, and culture that it enjoyed during the Eisenhower era. But that, to put it mildly, is an unlikely prospect. Like it or not, the war of ideas continues to rage, and though my irenic friend thinks otherwise, the right can hardly be faulted for recognizing and engaging that reality. FT

Craft Warnings

Gossamer rain enveiling night
(Earth's latest circuit nearly closed) just might
Mean more than weathermen surmise,
The questing man reasons as he plies
Narrow streets. Christmas being nigh,
Adorning lights fill in for stars on high
And salve the rawness in the air.
"Weather weaves a moody tale," declares
The questing man, who in his heart compares
The spray of rain with memories grown faint,
Yet dampening the spirit with a plaint
Of longing. "The soul's the instrument
Records the massive fronts of sentiment
Aroused when skies delight or tempests rage,
Those never forecast on the weather page."

Frank Wilson

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Opinion

Defining the Humanities Up

Wilfred M. McClay

Reading a new edition of Allen Tate's collected essays* is at once a stimulating and dispiriting experience. In encountering (or re-encountering) the mind behind this rich and varied collection, one catches a pleasing glimpse of the days when professors studied what they called "man," and did so with confidence, discipline, and energy. The pleasure quickly evaporates, though, when one recalls the stark contrast between that state of affairs and our own day, when it has become *verboten* even to invoke the generic term "man." Seldom if ever have the humanities been in such slack and confused shape as they are now.

Everyone knows about "the humanities," and most everyone has a vague sense that they are probably "a good thing"—one of those intrinsically good things, like soup kitchens and animal shelters, that decent, civilized folk should feel obliged to support. But in our day such an attitude is little more than a sentimental reflex. Truth be told, almost nobody has any idea of what the humanities are. Least of all the practitioners themselves. They tend to regard the term itself with some embarrassment, and if asked to define it, are likely to take the question itself as a hostile or impertinent act, unworthy of a serious response.

But this routine may not work much longer. Even intelligent and sympathetic observers are getting dubious about the emperor's wardrobe. The late Robert Nisbet used to tell a story about the academic scientist who was angrily accosted by his humanist colleague for "speaking against the humanities" at the previous day's faculty meeting. *Au contraire,* said the other; he was doing nothing of the kind. "I *love* the humanities! I would *die* for the humanities! All I asked was—what the hell *are* the humanities?" A good question. The day may be coming when it will be not only unanswered, but unanswerable.

In fact, that day may already have arrived. Take a look for yourself at the website of the National Endowment for the Humanities (www.neh.gov), which perfectly illustrates the point. One would have thought that a publicly funded, and perennially embattled, government agency devoted to the sustenance of the humanities would be especially keen about setting forth a clear and rousing rationale for them. Indeed, one would think that the formulation of such a definition or description would be an essential part of the agency's mission, and that the agency's website would be a perfect place to educate the public about that mission.

But the questing websurfer, seeking to discover just what the humanities are, will find only the following description on the site: "The term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both classical and modern; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism, and theory of the arts; those aspects of the social sciences that have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life." And that is that. Ask the U.S. government what the humanities are, and you get a lawyerly list of academic constituency groups in response.

Such a statement undoubtedly has procedural uses for the agency itself. But it certainly doesn't illuminate anything for the rest of us. It presumes that we already fully understand the concept being defined, because that very word, as both noun and adjective, is used in propounding the definition. So of what use can such a definition be? The statement rightly asserts that social sciences may or may not be "humanistic." But how are we to discern the difference, unless we already know what the humanities *are*? And what can it mean to define the humanities as including "the study of . . . the study and application of the humanities to the human environment?" Is this postmodernist hyper-reflexivity, or just careless proofreading?

Such language may be par for the course for legislators. But it is strange that, in its thirty-five years of existence under both Democratic and Republican administrations, the NEH has not seen fit to formulate a better statement of its own. A laundry list merely defers the question rather than answering it, pretending that an enumeration of *means* will automatically disclose the *ends* in view. But it doesn't, and can't. One doesn't articulate the mission of the Department of Defense merely by listing all the divisions of the armed forces, and the armaments and personnel at their disposal. One doesn't capture the animating goals of a manufacturing firm merely by listing all of the firm's discrete activ-

* *Essays of Four Decades,* ISI Books, 640 pp., $29.95.

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ities, from procurement of raw materials to collection of accounts receivable. In both cases, the task of definition requires that some overarching *purpose* be taken into account. To say that "the humanities" are merely the sum of the current activities of all those working in the humanities is not only evasive. It all but denies the possibility that the humanities have an intrinsic meaning and an ultimate purpose.

Of course, in this evasion the NEH is merely reflecting reality rather than shaping it. There is nothing even remotely approaching a consensus anymore about what the humanities are, what they are for, and why we should value them. That does not mean they are likely to disappear anytime soon. But their persistence at this point seems more a matter of institutional inertia than of any positive sense of mission, and the erosion of their standing in recent years has been alarming. The humanities reached unprecedented heights of prestige and funding in the post-World War II era; they can only dream of such status today. Now they are the Ottoman Empire of the academy, a sprawling, incoherent, and steadily declining congeries of disparate communities, each formed around one or another credal principle of ideology and identity, and each with its own complement of local sultans, khedives, and potentates.

Yet even this arrangement cannot last too much longer. The danger is especially visible in the English departments of leading research universities, which have nearly lost any plausible rationale for their existence, as their faculties, in their commitment to highly ideologized forms of literary theory and cultural studies, have not only been refusing to teach writing, but have lost interest in literature itself. Other disciplines, though not yet quite so "advanced," have followed the same path. Empires, like other institutions, can stand for a long time without a visible foundation. But not forever. And sometimes the collapse, when it comes, arrives with breathtaking swiftness.

Those who love the humanities, then, have to pay heed to the scientist's question, and be willing to say with more precision what it is that they love. This is not so impossible as it might seem. The starting point, at any rate, is clear. The distinctive task of the humanities, unlike the natural sciences and social sciences, is to grasp human things in human terms, without converting or reducing them to something else: physical laws, mechanical systems, biological drives, psychological disorders, social structures, and so on. The humanities attempt to understand the human condition from the inside, as it were, treating the human person as subject as well as object, agent as well as acted-upon. Such a manner of proceeding is not entirely dissimilar from the careful and disciplined methods of science, at least not in all respects. But it is distinctive, for it begins (and ends) with a willingness to ground itself in the world as we find it and experience it, the world as it appears to us—the thoughts, emotions, imaginings, and memories that make up our picture of reality. The genius of humanistic knowledge—and it is a form of knowledge—is its commensurability, and even consanguinity, with the objects it helps us to know.

Such knowledge can avail itself of the full range of analytical tools. But it utterly violates the spirit of literature (for example) to *reduce* it to something else. Too often, there seems to be a presumption that the only value of Dickens or Proust or Conrad derives from the extent to which they confirm the abstract propositions of Marx, Freud, Fanon, and the like, promote the proper political attitudes, or lend support to the identity politics du jour. Few in the academy admit to such reductionism, but it is everywhere massively in evidence. Meanwhile the genuine, unfeigned love of literature is hard to find—except, thankfully, among the brave but invisible underclass of devoted teachers across the land. Strange, that an era so pleased with its superficially freewheeling and antinomian qualities is actually so distrustful of the literary imagination, so intent upon making its productions conform to preordained criteria. Why bother asserting the autonomy or integrity of the imagination, unless one genuinely respects the imagination, and admits that there might be forms of knowledge unique to it?

In this dismal state of affairs, one has to be doubly grateful to the Intercollegiate Studies Institute for making available a new edition of the distinguished poet and critic Allen Tate's rich and varied collection, *Essays of Four Decades*, which first appeared (what seems an eternity ago) in 1968, and now arrives on the scene as water in a parched land. It would be hard to think of a book that better illustrates the famous adage that our books read us, rather than the reverse. To which one should add that these essays, read today, many decades after they were written, also "read" our age, in ways no one could have anticipated. Tate and his allies in the New Criticism are too often casually brushed aside as captives of excessive formalism and textualism, qualities that have the effect of denying literature's historical embeddedness. This charge, which was always superficial, appears very different today, when the very raison d'être of literary study appears to be disintegrating.

The first thing one notices is Tate's peculiar voice. It is a voice of high intelligence, classically reserved and slightly archaic in diction, seasoned with touches of quiet but acerbic wit. It is a voice animated by reverence for language itself, thoroughly at home in the realms of "symbolic imagination," and charged with an intense, Augustinian yearning for meaning, truth, and transcendence. It is a voice so old as to be almost ancient—

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and therefore entirely fresh, and strangely rejuvenating. The voice reminds us of the high seriousness with which it was once possible, and may yet again be possible, to approach literary studies, and by extension all the humanities. It is especially notable how many of the essays deal with issues of *responsibility*: the responsibilities of the man of letters, of the poet, of the critic, of criticism, of the quarterly journal. All these were matters Tate viewed with utmost seriousness and steadiness. Is it possible to imagine our era's feckless brand of postmodernist pranksters doing the same?

Consider some of the responsibilities Tate thought that literature was meant to shoulder. The man of letters, for example, is obliged "to recreate for his age the image of man," and to "propagate standards by which other men may test that image, and distinguish the false from the true." In the twentieth century, writers and critics bore the additional responsibility of restoring "the vitality of language," and protecting "the culture of language, to which the rest of culture is subordinate," thereby ensuring that language retains its capacity to "forward the ends proper to man." In a lovely essay on the responsibility of the poet, Tate insisted that the poet's chief task is that of *being* a poet, of exercising "the virtue proper to him as poet," which does not mean dabbling in politics, or seeking a substitute for religion, but to stick to his last, concentrating upon "the mastery of a disciplined language which will not shun the full report of the reality conveyed to him by his awareness." The social function of the artist is best fulfilled strictly as a byproduct of excellent work. The task of the literary quarterly was not "to give the public what it wants," but rather what "it ought to have." Nor did Tate quail and quake before the juggernaut of the imperious sciences. Instead he calmly responded, as in "Literature as Knowledge," that "culture, which is the study of perfection and the constant effort to achieve it, is superior to the scientific spirit, because it includes and passes beyond it."

Such a statement indicates not only that Tate had confidence in the humanities, but also that he understood their rationale. Only the humanities could speak of human beings in their wholeness, because only the humanities were conversant in what he called *rhetoric*, his term for "the figurative language of experience as the discipline by means of which men govern their relations with one another in the light of truth." In other words, one could not get at the truth about man through the abstractions of the pure intellect (which he called "the angelic imagination"), because such abstractions failed to address themselves to the texture of lived experience. One had instead to look to the products of "the symbolic imagination," which affirmed the particularities of the flesh, and yet used the figurative resources of language to reconnect those particularities to the cosmic order of which they are part, and from which they draw their ultimate meaning. Literature, he declared, is "the complete knowledge of man's experience," a "unique and formed intelligence of the world of which man alone is capable."

This last assertion probably goes too far, at least in the "completeness" department. Tate, like Matthew Arnold before him, may have expected too much of literature and art, and been disappointed as a consequence. A refined idol is still an idol. As Louise Cowan reminds us in her introduction to the ISI edition, Tate was a lonely, restless, marginal man, whose beautiful projections of an orderly, rooted way of life were completely at odds with the alienated and disordered way he actually lived, and who never found enduring satisfaction in his lifelong religious peregrinations. He was highly susceptible to the same "angelic" intellectuality that he deplored—and he knew it.

But such personal failings need not detain us here. What remains enduringly impressive in his work, and especially valuable in the present day, is the sturdy rationale it still provides for the humanities. We need to recover Tate's commitment to the unity of human experience, and to the worth of the imagination, when harnessed to the rational faculties and coupled with a sense of moral responsibility. He saw the humanities, not as an indiscriminate grab bag for all nonscientific human endeavor, but as highly disciplined forms of inquiry meant to explore "the experience of man *as* man"—rather than man "as vertebrate, biped, mathematician, or priest." We could hardly do better than to begin right there.

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Arguing Israel and the Holocaust

David Novak

It seems unavoidable that history will always link the reestablishment of the State of Israel with the tragedy of the Holocaust. There were only fifteen years between January 1933, when Hitler and the Nazi regime came to power in Germany, and May 1948, when the independence of the State of Israel was

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declared. In this very brief time, the Jewish people experienced both its greatest tragedy ever and one of its greatest triumphs. Though there certainly is a connection between these events, too many people, both Jews and non-Jews, think it must be a *causal* connection, that Israel depends on the Holocaust as a necessary precondition. This assumption has led to some very problematic theological speculations by Jews (and also by some Christian milleniarians) that need addressing.

Theology's interest in history should be to detect the hand of God there. Hence the theological problem—it is hard to see how the same God was involved in both the Holocaust and Israel's reestablishment. It turns out to be the most serious challenge to Jewish monotheism presently imaginable. The historical juxtaposition of the two events raises two great theological questions. Regarding the Holocaust, Jews ask: Where was God? Regarding the reestablishment of the State of Israel, we ask: How was God there? Can the same God who seemed to have been absent in the Holocaust suddenly become present in the reestablishment of the State of Israel?

Some Jews, of a decidedly pietistic sort, have argued that the Holocaust is God's punishment for the Jews having been seduced by the modern temptation to become part of the non-Jewish world and abandon their traditional faith and practice. (For example, see FIRST THINGS, April 1998 and August/September 1998, for the argument between David Klinghoffer and his critics, including me.) Zionism is the worst example of that temptation for the more radical of these pietists, because it, they argue, like all modern ideologies, is a pseudo-messianism, albeit of a particularly Jewish sort. They see Zionism as the arrogant attempt to solve the ontological problem of the Jewish people by human political means rather than waiting for the apocalyptic deliverance of the Jewish people (and with them the whole world) by God through His chosen Messiah.

A different theological approach might be termed "religio-nationalist." In diametric opposition to the pietistic approach, religio-nationalists regard the reestablishment of the State of Israel as the most important religious imperative of our time. For those who take this position, the commandment to settle the land of Israel and make it habitable by Jews is intimately related to bringing about the reign of the Messiah. In this view, the messianic reality is a process that begins with the reestablishment of the State of Israel and culminates in the full messianic reign in the land of Israel and beyond. This view has found liturgical expression in the prayer composed in 1948 for the new State of Israel, which asks God to bless the state as "the beginning of the growth of our redemption."

Because what many wanted to be forgotten would not be forgotten, the religio-nationalists had to accommodate the Holocaust in their theological-messianic vision. They accomplished this by pushing the date for the beginning of the eschatological process back to 1933 with the rise to power of the Nazi regime, arguing that the Jewish people were required to suffer the Holocaust in order to be worthy of the State of Israel. Where in the pietistic view the dead of the Holocaust are a guilt offering for the Jewish past, in the religio-nationalist view the dead of the Holocaust are a burnt offering for the Jewish future.

Both of these theologies evoke the tradition of classical Jewish messianism. One might identify the position of the pietists as a form of "apocalyptic messianism," and the position of the religio-nationalists as one of "historical messianism."

In historical messianism, the reign of the Messiah is brought about by a Jewish ruler powerful enough to gather the Jewish exiles back to the land of Israel, reestablish a Torah government there, and rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. It requires maximum Jewish political activity, centered in the land of Israel. It has as a consequence that Jewish political subservience to any regime other than a Jewish one in the land of Israel, whether from religious or secular motives, is at this juncture of history the greatest Jewish sin. A difficulty for this view is its dangerous mixture of religion and nationalism, which has led to much human suffering in recent centuries.

Apocalyptic messianism, which has far richer resources in biblical and rabbinic teaching, holds that the reign of the Messiah is not the culmination of a discernible process within history, but a singular event that human works cannot bring about. The Messiah is the object of Jewish hope, not the result of Jewish effort. He is transcendent, not in any way immanent. Such messianic hope limits the pretensions of this-worldly projects. It reminds Jews of the dangers of identifying with any totalizing schemes in the world that claim to be able to generate the end of history from within the historical resources at hand. This view too has a difficulty, for it seems to lead to a type of quietism that makes its adherents vulnerable to forces more politically "realistic."

In deciding among theological views, one should be something of a consequentialist: the choice of one theological position over another should be, if not actually determined, at least heavily conditioned by the fact that it implies a better ethical outcome than the alternatives. By "ethics" I mean what the Jewish tradition teaches is to be done in relationships between humans. I derive this rule linking theology and ethics from the talmudic dialectic between the theoretical

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and the practical. All the questions discussed in the Talmud and related rabbinic literature are normative questions: either they are questions of what one is to think or what one is to do. Every prescribed thought has some practical implication; every prescribed act has some theoretical implication.

The ethical implication of any theological position about the Holocaust is: What will be its effect on the survivors of the Holocaust, indeed on the whole Jewish people still in mourning? The pietist theology says to the Jewish people that our sisters and brothers, mothers and fathers, wives and husbands, daughters and sons all died *because of* their own sins or for the sin of being part of the Jewish people who had been so taken in by Zionism. The religio-nationalist theology says to the Jewish people that six million Jews had to die *in order that* there be a Jewish state in the land of Israel. It is hard to tell which answer is more morally offensive to Jews—don't they both basically torture the Jewish people?

In the case of the pietists, we must question whether working for a Jewish state in the land of Israel is a sin. Here we see the enormous theological difference between asking God—even angrily asking God—to justify Himself at the end of time, and providing a conclusive answer in the name of God today. One would think that proponents of an apocalyptic messianism would wait until the end of history to find out the consequences of sin. Instead, they presume to know what is to come, and they beat down their theological opponents using the Holocaust as a stick. If we assume with Scripture and the rabbis that God is "the judge of all the earth who practices justice" (Genesis 18:25), then isn't this theology, attributing an unjust punishment to God, a blasphemous indictment of God Himself? Should we imply that the survivors of the Holocaust are to hate God because of it?

In the case of the religio-nationalists, did the Jewish victims of the Holocaust (both those who died and those who survived) *choose* to be sacrificed for the sake of a Jewish state? And even if they did so choose, could that be justified in the face of the ethical norm, "one life is not set aside for another"? If the lives of six million Jews, and the continuing pain suffered by all the survivors, is the price that had to be paid for a Jewish state in the cosmic economy, then the price is too high. The end result, however good, would not have been worth it.

Both of these theologies are guilty of verbal abuse, which the law proscribes. We can learn the immorality of such theological explanations of the Holocaust from the book of Job. God rebukes the three "friends" of Job (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar), who, when they come to comfort him in his mourning, condemn him instead. God says to them, "You have not spoken to Me correctly" (Job 42:7), on which the great medieval exegete Rashi elaborates: "You should have comforted him as Elihu did, but it was not enough that Job was in sorrow and suffering, you added rebellion to your own sins by vexing him."

As long as even one direct survivor of the Holocaust is still alive among us, it is abusive in the extreme to suggest that his or her family and friends had to die because of something they or someone else did, or because they were means to an end. A good case can be made that as long as even one direct survivor is still among us, that person, and all of us who survived the Holocaust less directly, have the status of mourners, or perhaps orphans. Accordingly, we may not present any explanation of the Holocaust that the mourners and orphans could not possibly accept.

Apocalyptic messianism, at least, need not lead in this direction at all. It can instead play an important role in Jewish political activity, including the reestablishment of the State of Israel and its continued life and strength. Apocalyptic messianism can provide an important context for Jewish political activity, because by avoiding the idea that our actions will hasten the Messiah's arrival, it frees us to be realistic in our actions rather than zealously moralistic. Historical messianism, on the other hand, can quickly turn into a pseudo-messianism if its proponents become convinced that the end-time is beginning now and we are thus dispensed from the criteria of ordinary Jewish morality.

Apocalyptic messianism keeps our attention on the present and its needs. In my mind, apocalyptic messianism, minus pseudo-messianic historical judgments, lends itself to an adequate theological relation of the Holocaust and the reestablishment of the State of Israel much better than the historical messianism of the religio-nationalists. It seems to be harder if not impossible for the religio-nationalists to express their messianism without at the same time seeing the Holocaust and its victims playing some sort of instrumental role in a cosmic drama.

The question is: How does our moral duty to comfort the mourners of Auschwitz and Buchenwald enable us to constitute a coherent theology that sees the same God at work in both the Holocaust and the reestablishment of the State of Israel? Here I would say we Jews need to separate our anger with God over the amount of death and suffering in the Holocaust from the judgment made by some contemporary Jewish theologians that the Holocaust falsifies the fundamental covenantal promise made by God to Israel. That promise, however, would be falsified only if all the Jews had been destroyed, or if the surviving Jews were so

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demoralized that they could not go on as Jews and thus were to commit religious and cultural suicide. Yet two-thirds of the Jewish people did survive and in many ways—most especially in the reestablishment of the State of Israel—the Jewish people has done much more than merely survive. In the light of our obligation to comfort the mourners of the Holocaust, what greater comfort could we possibly give them than to demonstrate this truth to them in our own lives among them? The attempt to exterminate the people of Israel failed, even if we cannot celebrate that fact—yet. Our wounds are still too painful. Many of us still suffer from "survivor's guilt." Why did so many more righteous than we die rather than we ourselves?

But the reestablishment of the State of Israel is something Jews can celebrate now, even though many died in the event as well. The difference, I think, is that we only escaped the Holocaust; the defeat of the murderers came through the hands of others. In the case of Israel, we Jews didn't just escape our enemies, we triumphed over them. God gave the victory to us. There is a difference in the way we thank Him for having let us survive and the way we thank Him for letting us triumph, but the God who saved us from Hitler and who gave us the State of Israel is neither a God whose covenant has been falsified nor a God whose final and unique messianic victory has yet come. We who are alive today still have more to thank God for than to contend with Him about.

So, what is the theological connection between the Holocaust and the reestablishment of the State of Israel? If by "connection" one means some sort of causal relation, then, theologically speaking, there is none and there should be none. If there were any such causal relation, then it would seem we would have to "thank" the Holocaust in one way or another for the blessing of the State of Israel. The State of Israel does not have to claim the Holocaust as its necessary precondition in any theologically significant way.

The proper theological connection between the two events is not causal but analogical. The similarities are located in the very similar responses that are prescribed for those who have experienced either event: God is to be thanked now for our survival then. Our suffering does not admit of any theodicy because the ways of God are mysterious, the ultimate secrets are yet to be revealed. "The secrets are God's; for us and our children there is [only] doing all the words of this Torah, which are revealed" (Deuteronomy 29:28). Any attempt to reveal now what God intends to be hidden can only be destructive to ourselves and painfully abusive to others.

The Holocaust and the reestablishment of the State of Israel both pose great challenges to the Jewish people to remain faithful to the covenant. Each also poses a temptation. The Holocaust tempts us to believe we are so weak that the covenant and its responsibilities are beyond us. It tempts us to blasphemous despair. The reestablishment of the State of Israel tempts us to believe we are so strong that the covenant and its responsibilities are behind us. It tempts us to blasphemous arrogance. By tempering the fear of the Holocaust with the joy of the State of Israel, and by tempering the joy of the State of Israel with the fear of the Holocaust, we are able to speak to God and of God in the world, without presuming to speak for God or in place of God. That is the true task of Jewish theology at this juncture of history.

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Minding the Evangelical Mind

Mark A. Noll

Those of us who call ourselves "evangelical scholars" are accustomed to suspicion from the church and incredulity from the academy. Modern scholarship, many in the churches believe, has proven itself implacably hostile to faith. Evangelical Christianity, many in the academy believe, holds to propositions that have no legitimate place in learned discourse. Perhaps more commonly, we evangelical scholars find ourselves in the even more depressing situation where no one pays us any notice at all. As an antidote to the wounded amour propre brought on by this state of affairs, it is good to recall how Bishop John Wright once challenged Catholic scholars of a previous generation who were tempted by self-pity: "Where in the New Testament, the Church of the Fathers, or the history of the saints from Paul to Thomas More were the genuinely thoughtful promised any other lot, whether at the hands of the world or at the hands of their uncomprehending brethren, than contradiction and constant testing?"

For those of us who nonetheless continue to complain about opposition and neglect, Alan Wolfe's report in the October 2000 *Atlantic Monthly* on "The Opening of the Evangelical Mind" comes as a pleasant

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surprise. In the fifteen-page cover story, Wolfe advances what he obviously thinks are startling theses for the magazine's regular readers. His main point is that a number of religious colleges and universities (he mentions Baylor University, Calvin College, Pepperdine University, Valparaiso University, Wheaton College, Fuller Seminary, and also includes the high-profile evangelicals teaching at Notre Dame) are actually promoting a fairly vigorous intellectual life. Specifically, at these institutions, "evangelical scholars are writing the books, publishing the journals, teaching the students, and sustaining the networks necessary to establish a presence in American academic life."

Wolfe's article asks some important questions about the quality and durability of evangelical achievement. Before returning to these, it is perhaps allowable—if also characteristically un-evangelical—to bask for a moment in Wolfe's positive observations.

For example, Wolfe shows that evangelicals enjoy a few public spokespersons, like Richard Mouw, President of Fuller Theological Seminary, who can be as innocent as doves in proclaiming an old-fashioned gospel message and wily as serpents in knowing when, where, and how to proclaim it. Wolfe also provides some overdue recognition for the evangelical political scientists (including John Green, James Guth, Lyman Kellstedt, and Corwin Smidt) who have provided necessary categories and much of the essential analysis for understanding evangelical political clout in the recent past. In addition, he is unusually perceptive in noting that one of the roots of the current boom in Christian philosophy, to which evangelicals make a substantial contribution, was the painstaking pedagogy of O. K. Bouwsma, William Frankena, and William Harry Jellema, three scholars from a previous generation all but unknown in broader evangelical circles. (Wolfe might also have paid similar attention to the better-known Carl F. H. Henry.) He also notes the solid gains made by evangelical historians in pushing the record of revivalist, fundamentalist, sectarian, holiness, and theologically traditionalist groups into the consciousness of general American historians. (He mentions George Marsden as a key figure, as is appropriate, though an even longer article would have given Wolfe the chance to add the names of two deceased scholars, the Nazarene Timothy L. Smith and the Canadian Baptist George Rawlyk.)

Wolfe's appreciative report carries, however, far more than mere commendation. His probing of the new evangelical intellectualism is, in fact, as challenging as it is complimentary. It invites several kinds of response.

On the most superficial level, it is possible to question some of Wolfe's factual assertions. He confuses the chronology and the circumstances under which the distinguished then-Lutheran historian Jaroslav Pelikan left Lutheran Valparaiso University for employment elsewhere, and he depicts the style of Baylor's energetic president, Robert Sloan, as much more authoritarian than is the case. Wolfe, in addition, claims that the departure of George Marsden, Richard Mouw, Alvin Plantinga, and Nicholas Wolterstorff from the faculty of Calvin College in the 1980s left the intellectual cupboard bare, when in fact there remained (and remain) at Calvin an awful lot of solid academic contributors.

But such matters are niggling quibbles. The critique of evangelical intellectual life contained within Wolfe's substantial appreciation is worthy of serious attention from those who want to promote learning in league with faith. Two of the most sharply stated items in his bill of particulars are provocative questions about institutional statements of faith and a pensive query about the intellectual effects of evangelical democratic populism.

Regarding those statements of faith that several colleagues use to screen prospective faculty, Wolfe moves in two directions at once. On the one hand, he seems to suggest that schools that use statements of faith must inevitably lose credibility since they thereby choke off the free flow of debate, without which true intellectual life is not possible. In my view, this criticism is not compelling. Evangelical scholars who are active in their disciplines, publish in academic and popular forums, and use e-mail do in fact participate regularly in vigorous intellectual exchange. It is also the case that, as Wheaton's President Duane Litfin suggested to Wolfe, "a healthy academic marketplace of ideas will view academic freedom as the right not only of individuals, but also of those institutions [made up] of voluntary groups or communities of individuals." On this question, it would seem that Wolfe's pluralism, which should deprecate institutional conformity as seriously as individual conformity, points in the same direction as the evangelical insistence that faith statements function as an essential guardian of their identity.

In some of his expressions, however, Wolfe seems to question not so much statements of faith as such, but only the overly restrictive ones. Wolfe notes, for example, that although the English Department at Wheaton "has a love affair with Catholic—and Anglo-Catholic—writers, including Flannery O'Connor and Walker Percy," and although Wheaton maintains an important collection of the papers of G. K. Chesterton, C. S. Lewis, Dorothy L. Sayers, and J. R. R. Tolkien, it will not hire Roman Catholics and could not, because of its statement of faith, employ the Anglicans Lewis and Say-

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ers. In his words, "Without a literature that is in one way or another a product of Catholicism, Wheaton could not aspire to a life of the mind. A college that would not allow on its faculty authors whose letters are welcome in its archives has a problem it needs to resolve." If the defense by Wheaton's Litfin of faith statements is fair, so too is Wolfe's challenge about the shape such statements should take.

Wolfe is even more worried about the populism that pervades evangelicalism than he is about statements of faith at individual evangelical institutions. And well he might be. An ability to connect with ordinary people—in print, through the airwaves, by means of active voluntary societies, and above all in face-to-face speech—has always been the driving engine of evangelical religion. That same engine has often run roughshod over intellectual work. Wolfe is particularly concerned that since evangelical populism now finds expression in "a therapeutic sensibility and a culture of nonjudgmentalism," evangelicals will not have the wherewithal to do the tough reasoning, make the unpopular tenure decisions, and carry out the arduous research required for genuine intellectual life.

Wolfe was disconcerted, for example, to find at one of the institutions he visited an entire course devoted to the work of M. Scott Peck, whom Wolfe calls "one of America's best-known New Age psychologists." Wolfe is on solid ground in seeing the respect granted to Peck's ideas as the type of category mistake often made by evangelicals. As a popular figure and a publishing phenomenon, Peck does deserve attention, especially for the opportunity to ascertain why his writings resonate with so many readers. But to treat the writings themselves as of intellectual import is to confuse the dignity bestowed by popularity with the status earned by insight.

Evangelicalism's populist instincts affect the prospects for a genuine life of the mind in other ways. Wolfe is quite complimentary about the still new journal *Books & Culture: A Christian Review*, which has provided five years of stimulating engagement with a wide range of cultural and intellectual topics. Yet this magazine faces the same challenges to survival confronted by all evangelical periodicals that are not directed at the populist center. It is a successor to such publications as *Eternity*, *His*, and the *Reformed Journal*, all of which aimed just slightly higher than the democratic average that evangelicals know so well, but in the end could not survive.

Alan Wolfe has many kind things to say about the Christian liberal arts education that Wheaton College is trying to provide its students. Wheaton's appearance for the first time this fall among the "Best National Colleges" in the *U.S. News & World Report* survey might seem a fitting complement to Wolfe's *Atlantic* essay. Yet closer attention to the specific information supplied by the *U.S. News* tout sheets actually reinforces Wolfe's concern about the effects on evangelical learning of the democratic impulse. By comparison with other colleges in "The Top 50," Wheaton students rank in the top half or even top quarter. But in "faculty resources" it ranks dead last, and in general "financial resources" next to last. I note that this conjunction is pertinent, not as a cryptic plea by a Wheaton professor for a higher salary, but as confirmation of Wolfe's suspicions. Evangelicals characteristically view institutions of higher learning like Wheaton as worthy of both high expectations and enduring suspicion.

If, as the author of a book entitled *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, I might be indulged a few words on what Wolfe has described as "The Opening of the Evangelical Mind," I view signs of intellectual life among evangelical Protestants as the product of both energy and insight. The energy continues to come from traditional evangelical sources—urgency about the gospel, dedication to the Scriptures, and seriousness about God's law, but also status anxiety about a fundamentalist past. The insight comes from new and serious appropriation of classical Christian traditions.

Today we do witness an evangelical artistic and aesthetic awakening, but it follows trails blazed by Roman Catholics, Anglo-Catholics, and a few Dutch painters from the age of Rembrandt and van Ruisdael. We are experiencing a genuine revival of philosophy among evangelicals, but it is a revival fueled by some Thomism, more Kuyperianism, and also a little eighteenth-century Scottish realism. Political and social thought is quickening among evangelicals, but the midwives are Oliver O'Donovan's Anglican Augustinianism, Ronald Sider's Anabaptism, the social pronouncements of Popes Leo XIII and John Paul II, the odd combination of ultra-postmodernism and traditional Anglo-Catholicism promoted by the Radical Orthodoxy circle, and (again) the principles of Abraham Kuyper. Most evangelical historians who publish for broader audiences downplay their traditional evangelical providentialism for in-house consideration and take their ideological cues instead from Augustine, Luther, Kuyper, or Reinhold Niebuhr.

Among all the fresh evangelical initiatives, the Intelligent Design movement comes closest to using indigenous evangelical resources to build its intellectual superstructure. But much of the impact of this movement comes precisely from abandoning the biblical literalism of historic fundamentalism and pushing the debate over origins back onto territory once occupied by Aquinas' "Five Ways," William Paley's cosmology, and Thomas Chalmer's *Astronomical Discourses*—a territory where evangelicals are settlers rather than natives.

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In sum, evangelical intellectual life could not exist without both a distinctly evangelical religious energy and a broadly ecumenical appropriation of classical Christian resources from many traditions forgotten or suspected by modern evangelicalism.

Evangelicals should thank Alan Wolfe for providing considerate treatment of some of the fruits of this complex dynamic. We should be even more grateful for his challenge to think with greater care about our own habits of mind, our own expectations for learning, and the impediments we ourselves construct against faithful use of our God-given intellects.

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Evensong

We've almost forgotten to sing the sun down:

in candle-lit vespers
where cowled troops turn out
to sing *phos hilaron*, serious and steady,

or at some evening sacrifice
at the edge of the world where the sea fingers in
all along the tired shore,

or in a cave subterranean
where a deacon serves amber confessionals
and gold penitentials as rock shakes the floor

or out in a clearing
where a campfire holds orbits,
or here at this table, limbs folded, eyes pillowed.

Ignored in the evening the sun may rise dog-faced,
meat teeth lacerating the flesh of all labor
indoors and out.

Put to bed with a song
it returns like the palm of a hand
running rays through the waves of the wind,

soothing the backs of old fields,
jostling new feathery growth that turns up
like a fuzz on the side of a hill.

Jeffrey Johnson

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Against Sociobiology

Tom Bethell

To future generations, the Sociobiology Wars may come as something of a puzzle. The shared beliefs of the disputants were so much more impressive than their disagreements that historians may wonder what the fuss was about. Perhaps the controversy will come to resemble the Wars of the Roses, all of whose contestants believed in the divine right of kings. Their differing opinions as to succession seem rather trivial by comparison. In the case of sociobiology, all the principal actors accept the premise of materialism, sometimes called naturalism. They believe, or at least for the purposes of doing science they believe, that matter in motion is all that exists, and that mind and consciousness are merely special configurations of that matter.

Anyone who believes this must, as a matter of logical necessity, also believe in evolution. No digging for fossils, no test tubes or microscopes, no further experiments are needed. For birds, bats, and bees do exist. They came into existence somehow. Your consistent materialist has no choice but to allow that, yes, molecules in motion succeeded, over the eons, in whirling themselves into ever more complex conglomerations, some of them called bats, some birds, some bees. He "knows" that is true, not because he sees it in the genes, or in the lab, or in the fossils, but because it is embedded in his philosophy.

Sociobiology extended Darwinian insights about bodies to behavior, and may be thought of as having revived the old controversy about nature and nurture. Its participants were, mostly, Harvard professors, and included some of the best science writers of our day. Its two main antagonists, Edward O. Wilson and Richard C. Lewontin, both born in 1929, occupied offices one floor apart in Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology. For a while, they didn't speak in the elevator. Oddly enough, Wilson, the naturalist, was on the side of the genes, while Lewontin, the geneticist, was on the side of the environment (to oversimplify). A frequent contributor to the *New York Review of Books*, Lewontin has recently published under that imprint a collection of his essays, *It Ain't Necessarily So: The Dream of the Human Genome and Other Illusions*. His best-known supporter, Stephen Jay Gould, is the author of many books on evolution and natural history. Richard Dawkins of Oxford is only one of the many biologists who have sided with Wilson.

The conflict, therefore, should be thought of as a dispute between like-minded professors whose understanding of life on earth differed in detail, but agreed on a key premise: any reference to a creator or designer must be excluded from biology from the outset, as a matter of principle. Just as creationists have their favorite biblical texts, so do materialists have theirs. It is from the Book of Dawkins (*The Blind Watchmaker*): "Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose." No matter how much they disagreed with one another, they could all agree on that.

The controversy erupted in 1975, when Harvard University Press published Wilson's book *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*. (A twenty-fifth anniversary commemorative edition was recently published, with a new introduction by the author.) The Pellegrino University Research Professor at Harvard, and an expert on ants, Wilson has defined sociobiology as "the systematic study of the biological basis of all social behavior." The zoological chapters of his book, dealing with the social insects, fish schools, birds, elephants, and carnivores, were well received. But the final chapter, on human behavior, "ignited the most tumultuous academic con-

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troversy of the 1970s," as Wilson himself writes in the new edition.

Even before the trouble started, Boyce Rensberger, the science correspondent of the *New York Times*, wrote a front page article for the newspaper, "Updating Darwin on Behavior," outlining sociobiology's principal claim. In the older view, Rensberger wrote, the insect societies of bees and ants and the hierarchies of monkeys were seen as "evidence for the remarkable variety of nature." Now, however, researchers were coming to a "more profound conclusion." Beneath the variety there lay "common behavioral patterns governed by the genes and shaped by Darwinian evolution."

So that was it, then. Genes and evolution had shaped not just our bodies, but our behavior as well. Human behavior and human nature were not exempt. When Tom Wolfe referred to Wilson last year as Darwin II, he was being playful, but he also had a point. For Darwin's theory of evolution was being adapted to explain almost everything under the sun. That prospect should give good Darwinians pause, however, for a theory so protean that it can account for all observations about life may be little more than a veiled truism.

As late as 1963, the Columbia University geneticist Theodosius Dobzhansky had stated the older view of human behavior. "Culture is not inherited through genes, it is acquired by learning from other human beings," he wrote. "In a sense, human genes have surrendered their primacy in human evolution to an entirely new, nonbiological or superorganic agent, culture." The tendency of Wilsonian sociobiology was to put the genes back in charge. Wilson's life-long "dream of a unifying theory" materialized between hard covers in his 1998 bestseller *Consilience*. Ever-widening fields of knowledge were united in single "Ionian Enchantment." Everything is material, everything can be reduced to the laws of physics, everything that is alive ipso facto evolved. Mind is matter. Things exist because they were selected for in life's struggle. If they hadn't been selected for, they wouldn't exist. Everything is explained because everything is connected. In the "unification metaphysics" of Wilson's late period, one may say, the insights of Himalayan gurus received the imprimatur of cutting-edge science.

For earlier researchers the word "instinct" seemed a satisfactory explanation of much animal behavior. Then it fell out of favor—it glossed over complex mechanisms that were not remotely understood. The history of science has repeatedly shown this tendency. A new word or concept creates the illusion of explanation—for a while. Then it wears thin, and philosophers must come up with something new. The current mania is for genes, thought of as the material cause of a vast range of human behavior, character, and malady. "Genomania," as Lewontin has called it, began at about the same time as the sociobiology controversy. The almost magical powers imputed to genes reached what may have been a crescendo with the recently announced "decoding" of the human genome.

Fortified with the new terminology, the study of instinct was revived in the 1960s. Somehow, animals just did whatever was required: find food, avoid predators, make nests, reproduce. They didn't have to learn—"only obey," as Wilson put it. His own ants were "hard wired"; once born, they marched off and did their thing without trial or error. When Konrad Lorenz allowed that all these marvels must have developed through material evolution, by natural selection, the youthful Wilson was well pleased. "He secured my allegiance."

A key contribution to sociobiology was made by an Englishman, William Hamilton. He would repair from his depressing graduate-student digs to the relative comforts of Waterloo railway station, and there was rewarded with a monumental insight. Darwin's theory of evolution had implied that natural selection would generate a selfish world. It was "the fittest" that survived, after all, and that presumably meant looking out for No. 1. Yet, undeniably, there was a lot of altruistic behavior out there. Darwin himself had viewed with alarm the elaborate cooperation of the social insects. Hamilton's explanation, published in 1964, took time to sink in, but once it did, the evolutionists sang his praises and have continued to do so without end. Kin selection—of course!

A gene exists not just in one organism, Hamilton argued, but also in others, closely related. Siblings share half their genes, first cousins share one-eighth of theirs, and so on. (These ratios were arrived at not by comparing the actual DNA of individuals, but as a deduction from the postulates of Mendelian genetics.) Consequently, Hamilton argued, an action that endangers the individual but promotes the survival of more than two siblings, or more than eight first cousins, would nonetheless be advantageous: it would promote the spread of the gene that triggered the behavior which otherwise seemed so ill-advised.

Hamilton's argument became the backbone of Richard Dawkins' book *The Selfish Gene*, and it was a lifesaver for Wilson. The Darwinian scheme had been preserved intact. It had given away nothing by taking a more "inclusive" view of fitness. Then Robert Trivers expanded the analysis to more distantly related animals, positing genes for "reciprocal altruism." That was judged to be less successful, but with the costs and benefits appropriately assigned, it could be invested with an air of plausibility.

The kin selection theory, published in the *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, was expressed in obscure mathematics, but that was one of its triumphs. It all seemed so

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precise, so up to date, and yet so mystifying to the hoi polloi. *Nature* had rejected it! Hamilton was rapidly promoted from his waiting-room outpost. And when he died of malaria in the course of a research expedition to Africa last year, his funeral oration in the chapel of New College, Oxford, was not just delivered by the atheist Richard Dawkins, but reprinted by the *Times Literary Supplement*. Tom Wolfe didn't quite get it right, apparently. Not E. O. Wilson, but William D. Hamilton was truly Darwin II. "Those of us who wish we had met Charles Darwin can console ourselves," Dawkins began his eulogy. "We met W. D. Hamilton."

It's a sign of our times that when Wilson tried to show that an elaborated version of Darwinism could as easily explain human behavior and nature as it could the behavior of wasps and ants, the cry of indignation arose not from dismayed Christians but from a handful of leftist scientists, mostly secular Jews, based in Cambridge, Mass. The battle over sociobiology was sometimes construed as left versus right. But Ullica Segerstråle, the sociologist from the Illinois Institute of Technology whose book *Defenders of the Truth: the Battle for Science in the Sociobiology Debate and Beyond* was recently published by Oxford, writes that "the actual dividing line went, rather, between a particular type of New Left activist on the one hand and traditional liberals and democrats on the other." There is much to disagree with in her tome, but that judgment seems to be correct. The political spectrum went from left (Lewontin) to center (Wilson). The right was nowhere represented. (And don't even think about the "religious right," which had by then been banned in Boston.)

You might think that the left would welcome the inclusion of altruism and cooperation in the Darwinian scheme. But sociobiologists had framed the argument in terms of genes, which seemed too deterministic. How could a New Society be built if our tiny masters, lurking inside every cell, hold us (as Wilson said) "on a leash"? Such a vision could only discourage the advocates of revolutionary change. So there was a counterattack, led by the Sociobiology Study Group of "Science for the People." Their various statements were signed by up to thirty-five names, often preceded by initials only (to discourage sexist thoughts). In addition to Lewontin and Gould, three or four other Harvard professors from time to time signed the statements.

Today, the left's critique seems a curious mixture, ranging from the irresponsible to the astute. Brilliant observations are submerged beneath wild political judgments. Their vehemence stands in marked contrast to Wilson's moderate and carefully hedged views. The low point came in 1978. At a meeting in Washington of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a protester dumped a jug of water over Wilson's head while others denounced his putative encouragement of genocide, racism, and sexism. Even as the ice cubes were sliding down his back, Wilson had the presence of mind to note that a biologist in the audience, a member of the International Committee Against Racism named Garland Allen, had taken the floor to say why the attack had been justified.

"He said it was all of a piece," Wilson recalled. "Since the nineteenth century there had been a strong bias toward genetic determinism, the claim being that human beings are fixed in their destiny by their genes, therefore there was nothing we could do about it. Therefore the existing order is the best possible order, thereby validating the ruling class in their position. It was all a part of the continuing conspiracy by scientists in the ruling class." Gould, who was present, criticized the attack as illustrating what Lenin had called socialism's "infantile disorder."

On paper, the critics were sometimes just as extreme. Fifteen cosigners of a statement in the *New York Review of Books* dismissed Wilson's book as the latest attempt to reinvigorate theories which in the past "provided an important basis for the enactment of sterilization laws and . . . the eugenics policies which led to the establishment of gas chambers in Nazi Germany." By the time Wilson deplored "this ugly, irresponsible, and totally false accusation," he surely had the vast majority of scientists on his side. He was accused of being a "determinist," but nowhere had he said that human behavior was *determined* by the genes. "In rough terms," he explained, "I see maybe 10 percent of human behavior as genetic and 90 percent as environmental."

Here he ran into real difficulties, however. Such hedged statements have little value if the effective cause (whether genetic or environmental) cannot be effectively established. If one thing happens, the genes are said to dominate; if another, it's the environment. No outcome can falsify the theory. Meanwhile, the genes that are said to cause the behavior (or cause it a little bit, or cause it 10 percent of the time) have not been identified in a single instance. Lewontin and his allies did make such criticisms along with their political charges. But suggesting that sociobiology could lead to the gas chambers and saying that it violated the protocols of science was a poor strategy indeed. The scientific criticism, often excellent, was buried beneath political comments so ill-advised that the *New York Times*, normally sympathetic to left-wing opinion, didn't hesitate to take Wilson's side.

On this score, Segerstråle's treatise, over which she labored for at least twenty years—testament, if any is needed, to the padded state of the American academy today—includes a comment so inappropriate that it

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puts her entire judgment under suspicion. She charges, prominently, at the outset of a nearly five-hundred-page book, and without basis, that Lewontin and Gould "need[ed]" a scandal, "wanted to be heard [and] wanted to make a mark scientifically. Solution: create a [stir] around sociobiology, present it as both morally dubious and scientifically wrong—and in this way create a climate where people will want to hear what you have to say."

There is much about the left-wing worldview to disagree with, but the idea that its proponents' views are insincerely held for reasons of personal advantage is about as wrong as you can get. Leftists have had so much impact on modern thought above all because they really do believe what they say they believe, and with rather more passion than most conservatives. As for the idea that they "wanted to be heard," both were already on the Harvard faculty, Gould had his column at *Natural History*, and Lewontin had made a mark with *The Genetic Basis of Evolutionary Change*. My guess is that neither "needed" the controversy. In the case of the less cautious Lewontin, whose views about science have been strongly colored by his political worldview, it probably worked to his disadvantage.

Meanwhile, Hamilton, Wilson, and Dawkins had pulled off a coup of sorts—one that would prove to be of immense value to all of evolutionary biology. If you wanted to explain anything at all, whether physical or behavioral, you could henceforth assert that there were genes "for" that thing or behavior. Then you could bring in Darwin: natural selection had "acted on" those genes, causing them to spread. That took just three words: the genes in question "were selected for." After all the rancor and hostility and theatrics, this seemed to be genuinely scientific. In due course genes were supplemented by other units of selection: "memes," invented by Dawkins, and "modules," a creation of Steven Pinker of MIT. A good materialist himself, Pinker thinks "modules" have a physical existence. "Probably," he writes, in a characteristic passage of *How the Mind Works*, "they look like roadkill, sprawling messily over the bulges and crevasses of the brain."

After Watson and Crick's discovery of the double helix of DNA, genes were no longer Mendelian abstractions. Now they were physical entities—specific segments along the DNA chain. It was but a small step from that to the indulgent agreement in the Halls of Biology that genes for anything could be postulated. If they had not yet been discovered, one day they surely would be. Yet as far back as 1976, Lewontin was causing trouble, telling visitors to his Harvard lab that "we don't have genes for noses"—meaning that the DNA segments called genes code for proteins, not for external features of the body. Just how the cells of the nose (or any other body part) know that they are in fact part of the nose, nobody knows . . . to this day. In one of his recent essays Lewontin says that we still haven't found the genes for skin color (but it is assumed they must exist because the trait is hereditary).

You didn't (and still don't) have to know anything about the environment in which the fortunate gene/meme/module was selected for. You could make up your own story. Lewontin and Gould dismissed these scenarios as Just-So stories: How did the leopard get its spots? Well, one leopard accidentally had a "spots" mutation (call it a gene from now on) and it survived better, because the camouflage helped. So spotted leopards survived better than plain vanilla ones, and eventually displaced them. So that was how the leopard got its spots. (Next question?) The same argument could be applied to any trait that the sociobiologist desired to explain, whether animal or human. "The method consists essentially of contemplating the trait and then making an imaginative reconstruction of human history that would have made the trait adaptive," wrote Lewontin (and coauthors Steven Rose and Leon J. Kamin) in *Not in Our Genes* (1984).

Sociobiology purported to explain diverse aspects of human nature, thought to be universal in human society. A partial list includes: dancing, cooking, religion, territoriality, entrepreneurship, indoctrinability, blind faith, xenophobia, aggression, and warfare. In *The Origin of Virtue: Human Instincts and the Evolution of Cooperation*, Matt Ridley adds generosity, sympathy, kindness, and selflessness, qualities "unambiguously concerned with the welfare of others." Some behaviors do seem very ill-suited to the theory—masturbation, adoption, homosexuality, contraception, celibacy of the clergy. Don't they reduce the chance of propagating one's genes? "It's a stretch," Pinker allows, to say that the celibate "will have more time to care for nephews and nieces and so propagate their genes that way." Especially when they retreat to monasteries and shut out the world.

But that's okay. The theory serenely rides out this (or any other) storm. Evolution happened eons ago, you see, so "we are adapted to the Stone Age," not the computer age. Genes/memes/modules evolved in one environment, and we live in another. If the observed behavior corresponds to the adaptation story, the theory is confirmed. If not, it's because the environment is different now and culture is in charge. (Heads I win. Tails you lose.) It fails Karl Popper's well-known test: theories must in principle be falsifiable if they are to be judged scientific. When Robert Wright says in *The Moral Animal* that Darwinian selection "inspires a kind of faith," and that "one" reaches a point where "one no longer entertains the possibility

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of encountering some fact that would call the whole theory into question," he speaks more wisely than he knows. For there is indeed no possibility of such a fatal encounter with a fact. Wright fails to realize, however, that a field that smoothly "explains" whatever exists, with no experimental outcome that would call it into question, is no longer a part of science.

A peculiar omission from the sociobiologists' subdivisions of human nature is the faculty of reason itself. Stephen Jay Gould indirectly drew attention to this in his criticism of a claim that Eskimo behavior sometimes validates altruist genes. When food is scarce and an Eskimo family must move, grandparents sometimes stay behind to die rather than slow down the entire family. Here, genes are redundant, Gould points out. Old Eskimos can simply figure it out for themselves, and may be given an incentive to stay behind in families where "sacrifice is celebrated in song and story; aged grandparents who stay behind become the greatest heroes of the clan." Once reason is admitted as a characteristic of human nature—and in truth it is *the* characteristic, along with freedom of the will—it can be shown to do the work imputed to phantom genes in almost any example that sociobiologists want to bring up.

Nonetheless, in the biology departments and in the academy more generally, Wilson and his supporters resoundingly won the debate. The claim by Wilson and Trivers that sociobiology would soon take over the field of sociology has not been borne out, but it has had considerable success in academic psychology, where it has advanced under the rubric of evolutionary psychology. Here, the seminal work was *The Adapted Mind* (1992), edited by Jerome H. Barkow and the husband-and-wife team from U.C. Santa Barbara, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby. A prominent recent addition to the genre has been *A Natural History of Rape: Biological Bases of Sexual Coercion*, by Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer, published by MIT Press last year.

In 1975, it's safe to say, Cambridge collectives would have been on the march at the mere suggestion of a book about rape-specific "adaptations." The authors have wisely skirted the gene word, but that is because the field is so lax that authors can invent and multiply their own entities at will. "Adaptations" are vaguely said to be "in" bodies, but Thornhill and Palmer don't say where. (How would one go about finding them?) In a foreword, Margo Wilson assures us that the authors "passionately embrace the scientific method," but she doesn't see (any more than Robert Wright does) that theories that "explain" everything explain nothing. Ev-psych is currently fashionable, but the vogue will end, as it did with "instinct," once its all-embracing character is recognized.

Explaining something by saying that "genes for it existed, and were selected for," is little more than a reassertion of the facts whose explanation we are looking for. Analogously, if the stock market drops, investors, seeking an explanation in the newspapers, may find a headline like this: "Selling Pressure Causes Stock Drop." That doesn't help—it merely redescribes the phenomenon. We want a reason why it dropped—adverse political news, or perhaps an Alan Greenspan speech. "Genes arose and were selected for" has the same defect. It merely asserts that the phenomenon appeared, then became more common. It arose, one might say, because it arose, and then copies of it were made. That's all there is to it. In a devastating review of the rape book in the *New Republic*, Jerry Coyne of the University of Chicago pointed out that the authors' evidence is so adverse to their thesis that it is consistent with a simpler and more obvious hypothesis: that rape is not "adaptive" at all. "As with most sociobiological arguments," Coyne added, "only some level of concordance with prediction need be found to brand an act as an adaptation."

The left-wing animus against sociobiology becomes understandable once we look at its major defect in a political light. Sociobiology "explains" (in a very weak sense of that word) whatever exists. But as Marx said, the left wants to change the world, not explain it. The world that exists, filled as it is with injustice, must be replaced by something better; a world without inequality, for example. Existing qualities of human nature—the dissimilar attitudes of men and women toward sexual intercourse, for example—can be explained by the usual, unvarying, and unfalsifiable formula. The trait arose by accident, then was selected for. But the raison d'être of the left is to champion states, conditions, and attitudes that do not exist—gender egalitarianism, say. The sociobiologists' retort that these things don't exist either because the requisite genes never did exist, or (fatal flaw) were *not* selected for, puts the left on the defensive. So the whole field of sociobiology suffers from a bias against the potential and in favor of the actual, and in that sense it's true that it does have a "conservative" bias.

We can see the same thing in the assignment of costs and benefits in kin selection. In a plain-language section of his famous article, William Hamilton wrote as follows: "The alarm call of a bird probably involves a small extra risk to the individual making it by rendering it more noticeable to the approaching predator, but the consequent reduction of risk to a nearby bird previously unaware of danger must be much greater. We need not discuss here just how risks are to be reckoned in terms of fitness: for the present illustration it is reasonable to guess that . . . [mathematical symbols follow]."

The point to notice here is not just that the relevant costs and benefits have not been measured, but that

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there is no way of measuring them *other than by observing the behavior that they are said to determine.* The fact that the bird emits the alarm call itself demonstrates that the benefits (to the bird's genes) exceed the costs to those genes. QED. The theory is "proved," but it never really gets off the page and out into the measurable world. Not for nothing was it published in the *Journal of* Theoretical *Biology.*

The critics of sociobiology were using arguments that threatened to undermine the whole of Darwinian evolution, since the physical, the mental, and the behavioral are (in the materialist's world) parts of one material whole. Phillip E. Johnson, the U.C. Berkeley law professor whose most recent book on the problems of evolution is *The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism* (InterVarsity Press; reviewed in this issue), thinks that the critics may have "burned down the Darwinist house in order to roast the sociobiological pig." They were certainly playing with fire. The same critical scrutiny "might have far-reaching consequences if it were ever applied to the generally accepted Darwinian theory that complex adaptive organs came into existence through the accumulation of micro-mutations by natural selection," Johnson writes. "Here, too, the prevailing practice is to assume that stories of adaptive evolution require no confirmation from genetics, or paleontology, or anything else except the adaptationist community's prevailing sense of plausibility."

But the critics of sociobiology also accepted the premise of materialism, and that put them in a weak position. How else did minds appear, if not by evolution? Lewontin gave points to the opposition when he conceded the "undoubted truth" that "behavior must, like morphology and physiology, be subject to the forces of natural selection." (More recently, he has written: "No biologist now doubts that organisms are chemico-electrico-mechanical systems.") Gould makes a similar concession: "How can an evolutionary biologist deny that Darwinian processes can work on behavior as well as form?" Game and set to Wilson!

The critics of adaptive rape were similarly weakened. Thornhill and Palmer had written: "When one considers any feature of living things, *whether* evolution applies is never a question. The only legitimate question is how to apply evolutionary principles. This is the case for all human behaviors—even for such by-products as cosmetic surgery, the content of movies, legal systems, and fashion trends." The critics were disarmed by their shared worldview. "If Thornhill and Palmer want to lump rape together with tummy tucks and *Titanic* as evolutionary phenomena, God (or Darwin) bless them," Jerry Coyne wrote, his frustration showing. But he was not about to quit the Church of Materialism either, so what alternative could he offer?

After a while, Stephen Jay Gould seemed to pull back. He surely saw the danger—that an attack on sociobiology could damage Darwinism itself. This was far from what he wanted. The overriding impression created by Gould's work is that Darwin is his hero because his theory of evolution has provided intellectuals with a wonderful battering ram in the war against religion. Gould has himself been very much a leader in America's culture war. Here, his antagonist in the sociobiology skirmish, the aggressively atheistic Richard Dawkins, is his natural ally. By 1994, when Wilson's book *Naturalist* was published, Gould was cited in the acknowledgments, along with Hamilton, Trivers, and others, for "reading portions of the manuscript and generously providing help and advice."

Lewontin was not in that number, however. Unlike Gould, he has at times given the impression that he wouldn't mind if the Darwinian house did burn down—provided the materialist order could be preserved intact. As a committed leftist, Lewontin was ambivalent. On the one hand he could see that "evolution by natural selection bears an uncanny resemblance to the political economy theory of early capitalism. . . . What Darwin did was take early nineteenth century political economy and expand it to include all of natural economy." Darwin had admitted as much when he acknowledged the influence of Thomas Malthus. In Bertrand Russell's caustic phrase, Darwinism was "laissez-faire economics applied to the animal and vegetable kingdoms." On the other hand, Lewontin could also see that Darwinism had done the job—it had completed "the unfinished Cartesian revolution that demanded a mechanical model for all living processes."

To those outside the materialist citadel, Lewontin is interesting not just because he is willing to treat Darwinism with a disdain that is rarely found in the Halls of Biology. He seems primarily committed to a remade political order—to a new society based on egalitarian ideals (a recipe for disappointment, surely). He sees a thoroughgoing materialism as indispensable to science, and in an oft-quoted passage (the *New York Review* article in which it appeared has not been reprinted, alas) he wrote that that materialism must be absolute, "for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door." Nature, as he sees it, "is at constant risk before an all-powerful God who at any moment can rupture natural relations. For sufficient reason, He may just decide to stop the sun, even if He hasn't done so yet. Science cannot coexist with such a God. If, on the other hand, God *cannot* intervene, he is not God; he is an irrelevancy." Few biologists in our day have spoken so forthrightly.

Lewontin's 1992 essay "The Dream of the Human Genome" is one of the best critical treatments of the

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genome project yet to appear, and my guess is that its strictures will eventually seem understated. Wilson won the sociobiology war, at least in the academic departments and in the press, but in another sense it is not over yet. For there is a book that cries out to be written—a debunking of the whole "genomania" upon which sociobiology was largely based. Perhaps we should think of it as the astrology of the modern academy, with the fashionable microcosm now replacing the heavenly spheres. Just as mysterious emanations from celestial objects were once thought to shape character (with a role reserved for free will), so today mysterious emanations from molecular objects are thought to do the same (with a role reserved for the environment). What we need is a book that tells us what exactly we do know about genes, what we do not, and whether (as I am beginning to suspect) the whole concept of the gene is so overburdened that it may have to be re-thought entirely. Lewontin, the rare geneticist who is not inclined to make exaggerated claims about his own field, is ideally qualified to write such a study.

As for Edward O. Wilson, he grew up as a believing Baptist in Alabama, read the Bible through twice, began to study science, and then lost his faith. But unlike many others in that position, he has "no desire to purge religious feelings." Materialism itself replaced them. Earnestly, he has tried to make something grandiose out of that bleak philosophy by piecing its parts into a consilient whole. "Preferring a search for objective reality over revelation is another way of satisfying religious hunger," he candidly writes. I doubt it will satisfy him, or others.

One afternoon, years ago at Harvard, he showed me the ant armies penned in his office, patrolling about behind clear glass without paying us any heed. He talked most interestingly about them for an hour or more. Like other visitors before and since, I went away wanting to know more. God is in those details, after all. And when Wilson is studying his ants, discovering their pheromones, writing papers about olfactory communication among animals, he is also doing excellent science. He is being what he calls himself—a naturalist. In his consilient mode, on the other hand, not only will God elude him, but synthesizing the -isms and -ologies of the modern academy is bad science into the bargain. In trying to explain everything, one might say that he is not really doing science at all. Wilson's career reminds us that not only do science and religion not conflict, but that they actually work together rather well. FT

On Playing a Church Organ

It's something about the darkness of the place,
when I relax a moment to decide
what makes this work so pleasing; is it the thrill
of lights trained on the tall cross, or perhaps
the colored figures in the glass? But then
the stack of staves upon the stand cries out
for study, and fingers arch again and dance,
though not gracefully at first—more like cautious
children avoiding creaky boards. Yet hidden pipes
still awake and sing—and the dark, cool room
seems full. And then I realize: it is.

Mark Wyman

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Designing Our Descendants

Gilbert Meilaender

In one of the classic early discussions about the possible uses of advancing genetic knowledge to control and reshape human life, Paul Ramsey, more than thirty years ago, wrote the following:

> I . . . raise the question whether a scientist has not an entirely "frivolous conscience" who, faced with the awesome technical possibility that soon human life may be created in the laboratory and then be either terminated or preserved in existence as an experiment, or, who gets up at scientific meetings and gathers to himself newspaper headlines by urging his colleagues to prepare for that scientific accomplishment by giving attention to the "ethical" questions it raises—if he is not at the same time, and in advance, prepared to stop the whole procedure should the "ethical finding" concerning this fact-situation turn out to be, for any serious conscience, murder. It would perhaps be better not to raise the ethical issues than not to raise them in earnest.

My aim in this brief essay is to invite thought about *present* uses of genetic screening and the attitude we ought *now* to have toward the project of shaping our children, lest a focus on *future* possibilities should tempt us here and now to "an entirely 'frivolous conscience.'"

No one doubts that genetic advance will, in good time, enable us to find therapies for at least some of the devastating diseases whose causes are, in whole or part, genetic. Research is taking place on many different fronts. Xeno-transplantation—that is, transplantation of animal organs, probably pig organs, into human beings—is the focus of much work right now. Genetic therapy—in which a functioning copy of a gene is added, or, even more desirable were it possible, a defective gene is removed and replaced with a functioning version—is the holy grail of research. Although progress on the therapeutic front has been slower than many had predicted, it remains the focus of much research and many hopes. Perhaps more dramatically still, what is called germ-line therapy—an alteration not of the somatic cells of the body but of the germ cells, the sex cells by which traits are passed on to future generations—is increasingly defended and may become possible. Just as mind-boggling is the work being done to culture embryonic stem cells in order to grow organs or tissues for transplant. Because such stem cells are essentially immortal—they simply regenerate themselves—this research may even hold out the hope of retarding the aging process, which some people, at least, think desirable.

In short, from countless different angles the pace of research invites us to reflect upon the project of controlling and reshaping human beings or, more broadly still, human nature—all in the name of relieving suffering. Our language regularly invites us to view this project in favorable terms. Consider, for example, the verbal formulations I might have used here. I might have said that researchers are "progressing" or "advancing" in the treatment of genetic disease and applications of molecular biology in medicine. It would have been surprising and counterintuitive had I written that the sorts of possibilities mentioned above indicate that researchers are "regressing" or "retreating." We can scarcely imagine that increased ability to relieve suffering or eliminate defect and disease could be anything other than progress and advance.

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At the same time, everyone also acknowledges that new techniques could be misused, even though few agree on exactly what would constitute such misuse. So, for example, we have distinguished between somatic cell and germ cell therapy, approving the former and disapproving the latter. But anyone reading the literature will surely note how that line has begun to break down of late, as an increasing number of bioethicists seem willing to defend germ-line interventions. Or, we have drawn a line between therapy and enhancement—embracing the former while disapproving the latter. But, again, anyone reading the literature will note how this line too has begun to blur. In response to that blurring we may try to distinguish between health-related and non-health-related enhancements—between, for example, enhancing the body's ability to fight certain cancers and enhancing memory or, even, kindness—but it would surely be naive of us to suppose that the pressure to blur this line will not also be enormous.

To the degree that we as a people have lost the capacity to draw lines, to decide what should and should not be done, we are forced to take refuge in virtue ethics. That is, if we cannot definitively say which acts should or should not be done, perhaps we can trust people of good character to use these new techniques without abusing them. Yet, of course, *we* are the people who will be using the advances in genetics and whose wisdom and virtue must be trusted. What kind of people are we? To answer that question we need to think not about what may be possible in the future but, rather, about what is done in the present. We need to focus not on future subjunctives but on present indicatives.

And our present condition is this: we have entered a new era of eugenics. That science which attempts to improve the inherited characteristics of the species and which had gone so suddenly out of fashion after World War II and the Nazi doctors now climbs steadily back toward respectability. Eugenics becomes respectable again insofar as it promises to relieve suffering, as it claims for itself the virtue of compassion. The new eugenics has, however, a distinctly postmodern ring. In the heyday of eugenics early in the twentieth century, its proponents had in mind government-sponsored programs that might even involve centralized coercion. Thus, for example, as Bryan Appleyard, a columnist for the *Sunday Times* of London, has noted, "A Geneticist's Manifesto," signed in 1939 by twenty-two very eminent American and British scientists, "called for the replacement of the 'superstitious attitude towards sex and reproduction now prevalent' with 'a scientific and social attitude' that would make it 'an honor and a privilege, if not a duty, for a mother, married or unmarried, or for a couple, to have the best children possible, both in respect of their upbringing and their genetic endowment.'"

By contrast, the new eugenics comes embedded in the language of privacy and choice. Its two cardinal virtues—almost the only virtues our culture now knows—are compassion and consent. Compassion moves us to relieve suffering whenever possible; consent requires that our compassion be "privatized." A world in which prenatal screening followed by abortion of children diagnosed with defects has become a routine part of medical care for pregnant women—that is to say, our world—is one into which eugenics enters not through government programs but precisely as government removes itself from what is seen as entirely a private choice.

I am not invoking the "Nazi analogy," which has been disputed as often as it has been invoked in bioethical argument. I am not claiming that we find ourselves on a slippery slope, at the foot of which might lie Nazi-like deeds. Instead, I simply note how easily we may deceive ourselves about what we do here and now, how subjectively well-meaning people may approve objective evil. Just that, in fact, is the most terrifying point of Robert Jay Lifton's great work, *The Nazi Doctors*. He invites us to see within ourselves—good people whom we suppose ourselves to be—the possibility of great evil. "We thus find ourselves returning," Lifton writes near the end of his discussion of the "doubling" that made it psychologically possible to be a Nazi doctor, "to the recognition that most of what Nazi doctors did would be within the potential capability—at least under certain conditions—of most doctors and of most people." To read Lifton's account is, for the most part, to read of good and ordinary people in the grip of an ideology who suppose themselves to be engaged in a compassionate and healing endeavor. Something like that, Lifton suggests, is an almost universal possibility. And something like that, I am suggesting—something very different because cloaked in the language of privacy, yet not so different because it sanitizes and medicalizes as healing the killing of "defectives"—is by far the most common present use of genetic "advance."

This is our present situation. The day may come when we can treat and cure prenatally or postnatally many genetic diseases; however, for the moment we can diagnose prenatally far more than we can treat. In the meantime, therefore, we screen and abort. For now that is essentially the only "treatment" for illness diagnosed prenatally. We know more and more about the child *in utero*; hence, people quite naturally seek and use such knowledge in order to select the babies they desire and abort those they do not want. This is the new eugenics—which relies not on government coercion

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but on private choice and desire, on the commodification of children. Thus, Appleyard writes, "We could not now respectably speak of 'the improvement of the race' or of 'selective breeding'—the terminology of the old eugenics—but we do speak of the 'quality of life' and assess our children in consumerist terms." Not only is the meaning of childhood distorted but the meaning of parenthood as well. Selective abortion means selective acceptance. The unconditional character of maternal and paternal love is replaced by choice, quality control, and an only conditional acceptance.

People who have chosen or have been taught to think this way are the people who will be deciding what constitutes proper use or misuse of advancing genetic technology. We run the risk of cultivating frivolous consciences, therefore, if we pay attention to the moral conundrums of future subjunctives while studiously ignoring present indicatives. For as long as we are willing to rely on the routinized practice of prenatal screening followed by selective abortion we are not people who should be trusted to design their descendants.

Suppose, however, that we could be so trusted and that the capacity to design and shape our children, to shape their nature and character, were really ours. What sort of people should we aim to create? Taking my inspiration from a short piece written by Alasdair MacIntyre more than two decades ago ("Seven Traits for the Future," *Hastings Center Report*, February 1979), I suggest that we ponder this question briefly. An obvious way to answer the question is to think in terms that our moral tradition has taught us, in terms of the four cardinal and the three theological virtues. We should aim to design children who would be characterized by prudence, justice, courage, and temperance—and, in addition, by faith, hope, and love.

Within the Western moral tradition, so nicely articulated by Josef Pieper in *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, the virtue of prudence means something quite different from our use today of a word such as "prudential." For us, in fact, there is a certain tension between being good and being prudent. In the longer view of the tradition, however, the virtue of prudence enables us to see things as they really are. Not just as we would like them to be, or fear that they must be, or greedily hope they may be—but as they truly are.

Two things follow. On the one hand, this implies that nature itself—apart from our own shaping activity—has order and form to be discerned by the prudent man or woman. Prudence seeks to conform to the reality of things and does not suppose that our humanity consists only in our power of mastery over nature. Hence, the first task, as MacIntyre suggested, is not to change the world but to understand and interpret it.

On the other hand, human prudence can never exhaust or comprehensively understand the meaning and order of our world. MacIntyre illustrates how the limits to our understanding are evident in the very possibility of radical conceptual innovation. Relying on Karl Popper, he asks what it would have been like had one of our ancestors predicted the invention of the wheel. In order to explain his prediction this ancestor would have had to describe axle, rim, and spokes—in short not just to predict the invention of, but, in fact, to invent the wheel. The lesson being: we simply cannot predict with any precision what the future may be like, what innovations may appear; and we will want children who can accept the limits of our knowledge, who know that not everything is within our control.

To see the world rightly is, among other things, to see the difference between "mine" and "thine"—that is, to be just. Justice is not yet love; it is life *with*, not life *for*, the neighbor. Without denying our fellow humanity, justice maintains distance between us, lest the life of one should be entirely absorbed within the aims and purposes of another. Hence, to be just is to respect the rights of others, to recognize the claim upon us of their equal dignity. The denial of that common humanity is, as Pieper writes, "the formal justification for every exercise of totalitarian power." Such power, of course, can be exercised not only synchronically but also diachronically—across generations.

Justice requires, at least in some times and places, courage. For there will be moments when it is injurious to one's own interests or, simply, dangerous to be just. Courage is a necessary human virtue precisely because we are creatures always vulnerable to injury—the greatest of which, of course, is death. We have tended to picture courage as a martial virtue needed by those who must face enemies and fight. But Pieper reminds us that in our world, and perhaps in any world, it is needed as much by those who only suffer—not those who attack, but those who endure. It is needed if we are, one day, to accept the appropriateness of our own death, to acknowledge that a just affirmation of the claims of others means that we must recognize that our own time and place is not the master of every time and place, that we must give place to those who come after us.

To be that courageous in the service of justice cannot be possible for one whose inner self is not fundamentally in right order and at peace. Lacking such order, we are bound to grasp for what we desire at any moment, to flinch when sacrifice of our own desires seems needed for the sake of others. We should, therefore, want our children to be not only prudent, just, and courageous, but also temperate.

High as such an ideal of character is, however, Christians will not rest content with an ideal that can and has

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been known apart from Christ. They will also want the threefold graces of faith, hope, and love to be formed in their children. Faith is "the conviction of things not seen." Because we cannot fully see the way ahead, because, as I noted above, we must always live with uncertainty about the future, we are unable to secure our own lives. We exercise control of various sorts, we improve the human condition, but mastery eludes us. Hence, we must want our children to know the limits of their power, to seek wisdom more than power. Indeed, if our faith seeks its security finally in God, our life must be oriented toward One who most emphatically is not within our control. As philosopher Robert Meagher writes, describing St. Augustine's view: "It seems that one may either strive to want the right thing, or strive to have what one wants. The search for wisdom somehow involves the renunciation of power, the renunciation of possession, while the search for power somehow involves the renunciation of wisdom, since it presupposes the appropriateness of what it is striving to attain."

Because faith requires that we live without trying to secure our own future, it needs to be joined with the virtue of hope. We must hope and expect that God can complete what is incomplete in our own strivings, especially when, in order to live justly, we refrain from achieving good that can be gotten only by evil means. "You might have helped me," future generations may say, "had you only been willing to dirty your hands a bit." There is no reply to such a charge without an appeal to hope, without a sense of the limits of our responsibility to do the good. "Above all," Kierkegaard writes, "the one who in truth wills the Good must not be 'busy.' In quiet patience he must leave it to the Good itself what reward he shall have, and what he shall accomplish." To be hopeful is to adopt the posture of one who waits, who knows his fundamental neediness and dependence; for, after all, were the good for which we wait at our own disposal, there would be no need for hope.

There remains love, the greatest of the virtues. Love signifies approval, and, Josef Pieper writes, "the most extreme form of affirmation that can possibly be conceived of is *creatio*, making to be." Hence, our own love mirrors the creative love of God, which bestows on us the divine word of approval. Love therefore is, in Pieper's words, a way of turning to another and saying, "It's good that you exist; it's good that you are in this world." As we hope to become people who can love our own children in this way, so we would want them, in turn, to be people who can love as they have been loved—with an affirmation that is not conditioned upon the qualities of the loved one.

We can say, by way of summary, that, were we to undertake the project of designing our descendants, we should want them to be people who do not think the natural world infinitely malleable to their projects; who reckon from the outset with limits to their own knowledge of and control over the future; who respect the equal dignity of their fellows and do not seek to coopt others as means to their own (even if good) ends; who acknowledge even their own death, the ultimate of limits; who are prepared to subordinate their needs to the good of others; who are more disposed to seek wisdom than power; who know that the good is not finally at their own disposal; and who live in a manner that says to others, "It's good that you exist."

My argument has come at the question of designing our descendants in two stages. I first suggested that people who live as we do—who have accepted as useful the routinized practice of prenatal screening—are people who have no business attempting to reach out and shape future generations. But, second, I asked what kind of descendants we should seek to create if we were people fit to undertake such a task. If we are drawn to the description I have given in terms of the cardinal and the theological virtues, we should be able to see, from a quite different angle, why designing descendants is a project we ought not undertake. I said earlier that I took the inspiration for this idea from Alasdair MacIntyre, and I can do no better than repeat here the words with which he concluded his own exploration of the traits we should want our children to have.

> If in designing our descendants we succeeded in designing people who possessed just those traits that I have described, . . . what we would have done is to design descendants whose virtues would be such that they would be quite unwilling in turn to design *their* descendants. We should in fact have brought our own project of designing descendants to an end.
>
> It turns out then that my argument has immediate practical consequences. For if we conclude that the project of designing our descendants would, if successful, result in descendants who would reject that project, then it would clearly be better never to embark on our project at all. Otherwise we shall risk producing descendants who will be deeply ungrateful and aghast at the people—ourselves—who brought them into existence. FT

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Who Really Cares About Christian Unity?

Bruce D. Marshall

Future historians of Christianity may well describe the century just past as the age of ecumenism; some have already given it that label. Yet the modern ecumenical movement has almost completely failed to attain its one overriding goal: the reunion of divided Christian communities. The great labor of ecumenism has barely managed to dent the walls of separation that keep the divided Christian denominations from a genuinely common life—above all a common eucharistic life. Zeal and energy for more ecumenical work are understandably in short supply, and it would be rash to expect even the relatively modest gains of recent years to be duplicated in the next generation. Protestant and Catholic, East and West, Christians remain divided—and seem by and large content with their separation. For anyone who cares about the ecumenical cause, to say nothing of those who have devoted the best energies of their churchly and theological lives to it, this is a hard and bitter pill.

Why has it come to this? Explanations abound, but one possibility, while clear enough on the pages of the Old and New Testaments, has only rarely been voiced. It is easy to understand why, because this possibility is too fearful for Christians, whether friends or foes of ecumenism, to contemplate for long. Perhaps ecumenism has failed because God has abandoned the Church—withdrawn from it His Holy Spirit, and so consigned the Church to death. We need to face the dreadful possibility that ecumenism as we have practiced it with so much learning and good will for over a century has failed because God wants it to fail. Not that God is indifferent to Christian division, as ecumenism's foes allow themselves to think. On the contrary: in God's stringently merciful providence, death is the only destiny good enough for a willfully divided Church.

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One recent writer has faced this possibility directly. In *The End of the Church: A Pneumatology of Christian Division in the West* (Eerdmans, 1998), Episcopal priest and theologian Ephraim Radner makes a remarkably learned and provocative (if at times convoluted) case for Christians not simply to consider, but to accept, that God means to bring down the divided Church. Only in the deliberate departure of the Spirit from the Church can we find an adequate explanation for the hardened durability of Christian division and the striking contentment of Christians with their shattered communal life. Modern ecumenism's valiant attempt to overcome these divisions has yielded such meager results because of ecumenism's own deep, if sometimes uneasy, complicity in the assumptions and logic of division.

At present we can only await the mysterious working out of the triune God's judgment and grace upon our divisions, and upon our inadequate attempts to surmount them. In the meantime, as Radner rightly argues, we must lend a hand to the ecumenical enterprises already underway. This is part and parcel of the loyalty God demands of us, precisely toward the "empty precincts" of our Godforsaken churches. Like Israel in exile, mourning for desolate Zion, we can only love the Church, for whose ruin we have no one to blame but ourselves: "You will rise up and have compassion on Zion. . . . For your servants love her very rubble, and are moved to pity even for her dust" (Psalm 102:13-14).

I have elsewhere offered a detailed analysis and assessment of Radner's profound and disturbing book (*Modern Theology*, July 2000). My aim here is not to present his argument, but to pursue some of the troubling issues he raises. Readers who pick up Radner's book will quickly see how much these reflections owe to him. Outlandish though some of his ideas might seem at first, they are more difficult to ignore than one might suppose.

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It may seem peculiar to suppose that anything important, let alone the very presence of God among Christians, hangs on the eucharistic unity of the divided denominations. Theologians and laity alike sometimes vehemently contest the ecumenical policies of their national churches, and lobby to maintain the long-standing denominational status quo (witness the furor in American Lutheranism over the recent agreement to enter into "full communion" with the Episcopal Church). One often hears the argument that faithfulness to the theological insight of a particular tradition, its unique discernment of the gospel's heart, requires continued separation from other churches.

But for many American Christians officially sponsored ecumenism is not so much an affront to traditional denominational sensibilities as an irrelevance that keeps getting in the way. On this view, attempts to bring about Christian unity from the top down by overcoming traditional doctrinal barriers ignore the obvious need for different kinds of Christianity to meet the needs and tastes of different kinds of people. Or, worse, they are feeble attempts by the denominations to retain some of their lost power and control over the lives of Christians. At the local level, we already have all the unity we need. At least among Protestants, our members are free to come and go among our congregations as they like, regardless of denomination. The eucharist is no barrier. Most Protestant congregations either make little of it or now practice open communion, inviting all the baptized—and increasingly everyone present, baptized or not—to share the sacramental meal. A common ministry we may technically lack, since the divided denominations still have to issue credentials for ordained ministers. But this makes little difference in practice. We can cooperate, or not, to whatever extent it serves local needs, in particular the need for growth.

This outlook helps explain the predatory relationship that so often obtains among Christian congregations in America. In every city, suburb, and village, countless churches must grow or die. They therefore compete fiercely for each other's members, and the old denominational boundaries mean little. If a given Sunday's visitors happen to come from the church on the next corner, few pastors or lay leaders will have any qualms about recruiting them for their congregation. Whether the denomination of their last church was different from—or the same as—ours seldom matters much. It's not just every denomination, but every congregation, for itself.

In this setting open communion is hardly an unambiguously unifying gesture. Whatever the intention behind it, the message is often clear enough: it doesn't matter where you come from—even if you come from Rome. If it's the eucharist you want, we'll give it to you right now, no questions asked. We Protestants, it appears, practice open communion not because it is important that our congregations and denominations celebrate the eucharist together (this rarely happens), but because it hurts church growth not to invite people to take part. While often enough well meant, open communion readily turns into a proselytizing tool. If this free exchange—and pursuit—of each other's members is all the unity we need, then local cooperation has neither solved nor bypassed the ecumenical problem of denominational disunity, but has simply made it worse.

The disunity of competing congregations apparently stems from the same source as the long-running eucharistic disunity of competing denominations: what Radner calls a "contradiction of ecclesial love." This refusal of love need be neither vicious nor petty. It only requires that we persistently place our own interests above those of Christ's whole body. These interests can be quite legitimate as far as they go, whether the purity of our doctrine or the growth of our congregation. But when our own interests, however legitimate, matter more to us than our unity with all the other members of Christ's body (offensive to us though some of Christ's members may be), then we love ourselves more than his body—and more than its head.

Christian congregations did not always tolerate the contradiction of love so readily as we now do. In the early days of Christianity, a baptized person traveling outside his own city would carry a letter from his bishop so that he could be received at the eucharist in another city's congregation. Such a gesture presumes that Christian congregations all belong to one body—Christ's own—in which every member already has a share. The bishop's or pastor's job is not to steal someone else's sheep, but to shepherd any member of the flock who happens to come within his reach. At the same time membership in the Church was not offered to anyone who walked in the door. Preparation for baptism frequently took several years. Especially after the conversion of Constantine in the early fourth century, the Church was often notably cautious about admitting new members.

In this setting the very idea of churches, local or denominational, competing with one another for members was not so much regrettable as incomprehensible. You don't prey upon your own body. How could the mouth vie with the ear to see who gets the foot? Of course this doesn't mean that there were no dissensions and divisions in the early Church; there were plenty. But even when they fell short of separated eucharists and ministries—full-fledged schism—Christians in the ancient world sensed that this failure of love

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threatened the very existence of the Church. So Clement of Rome, writing to the church at Corinth around the end of the first century: "Why are there strife and passion, schisms and even war among you? Do we not possess the same Spirit of grace that was given to us and the same calling in Christ? Why do we tear apart and divide the body of Christ? Why do we revolt against our own body? Why do we reach such a degree of insanity that we forget that we are members one of another? . . . Your division has led many astray, has made many doubt, has made many despair, and has brought grief upon us all."

The reasons why the early Christians set such great store by their unity with one another are not far to seek; the New Testament spells them out with disarming clarity. Whatever else the Church may be, it is Christ's body, and Christ cannot be divided (note Paul's astonished repudiation of the very suggestion of this in 1 Corinthians 1:13). The Church's unity in Christ is not simply a goal to be sought, still less an impossible ideal. It is a present reality—as much a reality as the risen Christ himself. In baptism the Holy Spirit makes members of the Church by joining us in love to Christ and, equally, to one another. Paul does not implore the Ephesians to seek by the Spirit's power a unity they presently lack, but to "*maintain* the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3), the very bond that holds together the one body of Christ (cf. Colossians 3:14-15).

The love and peace the Spirit gives are inseparable, above all, from the eucharist. "*Because* there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:17). The love that unites Christians around the Lord's table is not an invisible tie that we might succeed or fail at making known to the world, but which persists in any case. In the New Testament the eucharistic unity of the Church is an entirely public and visible bond. The love on display in the Church's eucharist is, indeed, the means by which the world is to believe the gospel and come to know the triune God (cf. John 13:35). The Spirit forms Christ's public body, gathered around the eucharist, simply by giving us a share in his own love. This love is the same bond that eternally unites the Spirit to Christ and both to the Father from whom they come forth. What visibly unites the Church in time is nothing less than the one love that eternally unites the persons of the triune God: "As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us, so that the world may know that you have sent me" (John 17:21; cf. 17:23).

Of course since we are commanded to abide in this love, to "maintain" it, it follows that we may also forsake it, and the New Testament is equally plain about the consequences of this contradiction of love. When any of us—congregations, denominations, or whatever—goes ahead with our own supper, regardless of whether the whole body can share and rejoice in it, then "it is not really the Lord's supper" that we eat (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:20-21). When we go about our eucharists "without discerning the body"—surely not, in the context of Paul's polemic against Corinthian factionalism, the risen flesh of Christ in the eucharistic elements, but the ecclesial body with which the eucharist is supposed to unite us—then our eating and drinking fails to "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes"; instead we "eat and drink judgment" against ourselves (1 Corinthians 11:26-29). From our sectarian eucharists, open or closed, the risen Christ is absent. A divided Church proclaims the Lord's death, all right, but not the death of a Lord who yet lives and will come again; not the Lord's death, but simply a dead Lord. A Church of separate and competing eucharists cannot, in other words, reveal the gospel of the resurrection to the world. It can only veil the gospel, not only from the world, but from itself. And, to recall Paul one last time (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:3), a community to which the gospel is veiled is a perishing community, itself a body slated for death.

Where love is contradicted the Church must perish. But equally the Church must die where truth is contradicted. Surely disunity is the price, great and tragic though it may be, we have sometimes had to pay for the truth of the gospel. So all the parties to the divisions that stem from the sixteenth century have traditionally maintained. For the sake of the gospel we have had to accept division, rather than remain part of a single eucharistic community and bear its self-inflicted wounds and dissensions in hope and love. Roman Catholicism has maintained this assumption as much as the various forms of Protestantism. But let us look at the matter from a Protestant point of view.

Whatever our ecumenical orientation, we Protestants will naturally insist that the divisions of the sixteenth century were a faithful and legitimate ecclesial response to the abuses of the medieval Church and the threat to the gospel that they presented. Some may regard the divided Western Church as an avoidable tragedy, others as a lamentable necessity, some (though once of course virtually all) as a liberation still to be celebrated. But few will finally contest that in the circumstances, the Reformers took the best option available to them. Roman Catholic theology too now usually accepts the legitimacy of the Reformation protest against the late medieval Church and its theology, even if it tends, understandably, not to endorse the division that resulted.

Surely, one might argue in defense of the Reformation, disunity is tolerable if the gospel itself is at stake.

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The Reformers for the most part did not initiate division, but reluctantly accepted it late in the game, after repeated efforts to maintain the unity of the Western Church had failed. By accepting disunity only for the sake of the gospel, it might seem as if the Reformers put as high a value on the public unity of the Church as it is possible for Christians to do. Nothing less than the gospel, and thereby Christ himself, could authorize us to accept a divided Church.

But how *could* the Church be divided "for the sake of" the gospel? The Reformers believed that the gospel itself was under relentless attack from the most powerful forces in the Church. Let us assume that they were right about this. If the gospel authorizes us under such circumstances to set up our own church, then in effect we have Christ's command to dismember his own body—the same body that, as the New Testament teaches, Christ does not despise, but nourishes, cares for, and loves unto death (cf. Ephesians 5:29). Even modest and ecumenically uncontroversial accounts of the Reformation's legitimacy apparently end up, in Radner's phrase, making Christ "the very type of schism." Of course in the sixteenth century Rome was at least equally willing to carve up the wounded body, sometimes by murderous persecution. But one has to wonder whether being the victim of persecution really gives us the right to divide the Church—to match our tormentors' lack of ecclesial love with our own.

What, though, was the alternative? Here again Radner makes a striking suggestion. The Church's post-Reformation history, he argues, does in fact present an arresting paradigm of how to respond to assaults on the gospel without resorting to division: Jansenism. Especially in the wake of the papal Constitution *Unigenitus* (1713), the already beleaguered Jansenists saw themselves confronted with the problem that had faced Protestants in the sixteenth century: "How could one stay bound to a Church whose leadership had apparently attacked basic truths of the gospel?" They self-consciously refused, however, the Protestant solution. In an immense literature reflecting on their plight and seeking a scripturally faithful response to it, the Jansenist Appellants determined that there would be no Jansenist church, no separated ministry, sacraments, and congregations. When forces opposed to Christ and his gospel are afoot in the Church—in fact seem to hold sway—for the sake of Christ and the gospel we must refuse submission to them, and live with the consequences. This the Jansenists did, for almost two centuries. We may appeal from papal authority to a future council, as the Protestants had done before. But we may not leave the Church. Even if excommunicated, we must remain loyal to it. The faithful response to such ecclesial misery, as theologians like Augustine and Radbertus had already suggested, is not separation, but solidarity with Christ's wounded body—to suffer, as Radner puts it, "Jesus' suffering for the Church."

Of course Jansenism has vanished into history, while we Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and so forth are still around—as, indeed, is a separate Roman Catholic Church, sometimes apparently still determined to go it alone. Each of us might be inclined to claim our continued existence as a victory for the cause of the gospel in the world, at least as interpreted and defended by our own particular community. But if the gospel offers no authorization to dismember Christ's body, then the survival of separated communities, however passionately each seeks to defend the Christian message in its truth and purity, cannot be taken as the gospel's triumph. On the contrary, as Vladimir Soloviev already suggested a century ago: "The cause of the general failure of the Christian enterprise . . . lies not in the protective Christianity of the East and not in the active Christianity of the West, but in their anti-Christian separation." The Jansenist movement eventually disappeared just because the Jansenists were unwilling to defend the gospel by an action against the gospel. In this acquiescence to what Radner calls "its own disappearance as an act of protest" some will no doubt see a reforming movement that was insufficiently radical to realize its ends. But perhaps one might see instead a willingness on the part of Jansenist theology—far more radical in practice than that of the Reformers, whatever their rhetoric—to commit the destiny of the Church and the cause of the gospel to God alone.

Historical and sociological explanations of Christian division can certainly be true and valuable as far as they go. But Christians, at least, will want to know what *God* has to do with the disunity of the Church. This is not an easy question to answer. The New Testament obviously depicts a number of conflicts among Christians. But of the long-standing Western denominational status quo—separated eucharistic communities that (more or less) recognize each other as churches but are content to remain separate—there is not a trace. In fact the New Testament apparently ties the presence and purposes of God in the world so closely to the creation of a single visible eucharistic community that the status quo to which we have grown quite accustomed is virtually unintelligible. It's not clear how to account for the obvious fact of Christian division, or to make sense of what God has to do with it.

One of Radner's signal contributions is to have shown that there is a clear scriptural paradigm for coming to grips with the divided Church and its sober fate: that God's Spirit is no longer with us. Biblical Israel

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serves as the chief figure or type of Christian division. Willfully sundered into conflicting kingdoms, scriptural Israel is abandoned by God for its loveless disobedience (see Ezekiel 10-11). Even the Lord's beloved Zion must weep over the absence of the comforter (Lamentations 1). The destiny of divided Israel is exile, destruction, and death. Why should a divided Church expect a better fate?

Reflection on the passion of Christ only intensifies this thought. As Christian exegetes have long suggested, the crucified Jesus accepts Israel's abandonment by God in a kind of concentrated form. Equally, Christians have insisted, the Church itself inevitably has a share in Christ's passion; the baptized will not escape conformity to their crucified head (see Hans Urs von Balthasar's *Mysterium Paschale* for a contemporary version of both points). Of course the precise character of the Church's conformity to Christ will depend upon whether it accepts the cross willingly—bears the self-inflicted wounds of the whole body in love—or has the cross thrust upon it against its will. A stubbornly fragmented Church cannot escape the cross. Still less can it expect from its crucified head pardon for its divisions. Like divided Israel and its divinely abandoned Israelite Lord, the Church should expect instead death, and the grave.

The scriptural figure of divided Israel may thus grant us some comprehension of how Christian division may be embraced by the judgment and grace of a God who in no way wills it or tolerates it, and whose purpose in the world is the opposite of what the Church has become. It may also help us understand why so few Christians care that the Church is divided. The divisive contradiction of ecclesial love is sin, and so should lead to repentance. But divided Israel proves incapable of repentance, not for want of opportunity, but because she has foregone the spiritual resources to take offense at her own sin. "They were not ashamed, they did not know how to blush," says Jeremiah 6:15. Even in exile, Israel can only wait for a repentance yet to come, when new life from the dead finally allows the tears of sorrow for the sins of the fathers to flow in earnest (cf. Ezra 9-10 and Nehemiah 8-9). So it is, apparently, with the divided Church. Our congregations are growing and our denominations, often enough, are flourishing. Why should we spend a lot of time and money on ecumenism, let alone worry that the Church is going to die?

This rejection of repentance may explain why modern ecumenism, despite its best efforts and intentions, has found it difficult to avoid complicity in the destructive logic of division. Christian unity, as ecumenical theologians know, must come to pass through an exchange of gifts, where each denomination supplies the other's need and lack for the sake of the wounded whole. But in practice this vision proves impossible to sustain. Each of the divided denominations is convinced that it has all it needs in order to be Christ's faithful Church. That any denomination might repent, might confess its need for another, is out of the question. Ecumenical dialogue has no option but to accept, albeit sometimes reluctantly, unrepentant self-sufficiency on all sides. But when the denominations approach one another on the assumption of self-sufficiency, rather than of mutual want and need, they will naturally see no need for each other's gifts, and so feel free to spurn them. Little wonder that so much ecumenical effort has achieved so little in the way of actual unity.

To this assimilation of the divided Church to divided Israel it will surely be objected that the situation of God's people is different after Christ. The Church cannot be abandoned as Israel once was, cannot die as Israel once did. For the moment we can leave aside the supersessionist tones in which this suggestion is often put. In any case the Church has Christ's promise that the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Or in the language of my own Lutheran tradition, "one holy Church is to abide forever," even if that Church may sometimes be hard to locate. That God might hand the Church over to death, that the Spirit, and so the risen Christ, are even now withdrawn from our divided eucharists, seem like thoughts completely at odds with the legitimate confidence of Christians that nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

To be sure, the tomb is not the last word upon the crucified Jesus, nor exile and destruction upon divided Israel. Let us recall that after all those who had lived in division perished in exile, a remnant of Israel returned to Zion, there to begin the life of God's people anew. We too may expect that one day a new generation will arise from the withered branches of the divided Church, and gather in unity and love around the Lord's table, as our ancestors once did. Of course each of the divided denominations is practiced at taking itself as the faithful remnant, and the rest of the divided Church as the branches fit for burning. But this is to misunderstand the way in which Israel is a figure of the Church. The faithful remnant goes into exile along with the faithless crowd—think of Jeremiah—and both alike die in an alien land, unable to bring the song of the Lord to their lips. The death of the divided Church is still before us, only dimly perceptible. We cannot know just how it will happen, but we can expect that all the Church's members will share the same fate, from the most ecumenically devoted to the most hardened sectarians. Still less can we know what form the Church's new life will take, but we may

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hope that God will give it new life from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus does not entitle us to think that the Church can never die, but only that death will not be the last word upon it.

That the *risen* Christ might be absent from the Church, as I have here suggested, is not quite the same thing as Christ being entirely absent. As ecumenical theology rightly argues, there is a persistent unity of the Church in the midst of all its divisions. This is not a eucharistic unity, for there division reigns. But another sacrament, baptism, unites the warring members of Christ's body to their head. It joins to him those who refuse to be joined to one another. So the Christ with whom baptism unites Christians is indeed present in the Church, even now.

Divided Christians should perhaps not, however, take too much comfort in this thought. As the New Testament teaches, baptism at present unites us with Christ in death (cf. Romans 6:5); the resurrection it promises still lies in the future. In baptism a willfully divided Church remains united with Christ, but with the dead Christ, deposed from his cross and ready for the tomb. In that unexpected sense it is indeed one Church. But the baptismal unity of the divided Church is no basis upon which it can rebuild its lost eucharistic unity, moving as from strength to strength. The divided Church's genuine unity—its union with the one Christ in his death—marks it for death. The Church's death will come not from the absence of Christ, exactly, but from the peculiar way in which a deliberately divided body is united with him. As Christ himself could not, precisely in the tomb, be without the love of God, so the divided Church cannot be separated from this love, even in its coming death.

However much we may learn from the past, we cannot change it. We may regret that no side in the sixteenth-century conflicts accepted the burden of unity that the Jansenists were later willing to bear. Just because they did not, however, our situation is different from the Jansenists'. They could bear ecclesial affliction from within, and accept the death of their own act of protest as the cost of unity in Christ. We are already divided, apparently beyond repair, having proven virtually powerless even to change the present—to escape the dreadful legacy of division. So our death will come out quite differently than did the Jansenists'.

What shall we do? Perhaps, like Israel groaning under the prophet's word of judgment, we can only worship the Lord as we have been commanded, seek to obey him, and wait in fear and hope for what he will make of our ruined ecclesial life. This is not to say that the Church has no vocation, nothing to offer the world. By its own dying it will reveal the crucified to the world, and beyond that, in a way unfathomable to us, its new life will reveal the risen one. The coming death of the Church need not mean the demise of Christianity in the West. Rather the Church's acceptance of its death is its only hope for life. The love of God's servants for the rubble we have made of the Church will not be in vain. As Psalm 102 continues: "The nations will fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth your glory. For the Lord will build up Zion again, and appear in all his glory." FT

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Books In Review

Fragments of Ancient Faith

THE OWL, THE RAVEN, AND THE DOVE: THE RELIGIOUS MEANING OF THE GRIMMS' MAGIC FAIRY TALES. By G. RONALD MURPHY, S.J. *Oxford University Press. 189 pp. $25.*

***Reviewed by* Philip Zaleski**

THERE'S NO ESCAPING the Brothers Grimm. Their masterwork, *Kinderund Hausmarchen* (1812-1822), usually translated as *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, will soon celebrate its bicentennial, yet it still reigns unchallenged as the greatest folk tale collection of them all. Millions of children have listened, spellbound, as parent or schoolteacher initiates them into its primeval mysteries of baked witches and shape-changing wolves, of gallant princes and dreaming damsels. Thousands more have been initiated through Disney's sweetened (but still, to a tot, terrifying) film adaptations.

The 210 tales in the canon have wielded their power upon a number of disciplines, including literary theory, anthropology, cultural history, and, most notably, psychology, with Freud, Jung, and Bettelheim numbering among the devotees. Even as you read this review, industrious scholars are spewing out, in unconscious pantomime of the Grimms' own hard-working dwarves, truckloads of Marxist, feminist, deconstructionist, you-name-it analyses of the tales and their authors. The Grimms have left their stamp on twentieth-century literature as well, as a visit to the elf-and-warlock-ridden fantasy shelves of your local bookstore will confirm.

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There is good reason for this massive influence. One can argue, with some justification, that the greatest of the Grimms' tales—known as the *Zaubermarchen* or magical tales—have become such cultural landmarks that they have settled permanently into the human psyche, where they help to shape our response to many of life's mysterious realms, especially the time between waking and sleeping, between dusk and dark, and between childhood innocence and adult duplicity.

Tales with such an impact, one could reasonably think, might well be religious at core, and yet Grimm's fairy stories have almost never been considered from this perspective. The only exception is Bettelheim, who in *The Uses of Enchantment* hinted that the stories had hidden spiritual depths but who remained content to construct neo-Freudian sandcastles in their oedipal shallows.

NOW ALONG COMES G. Ronald Murphy, S.J., professor of German at Georgetown University, ready to take the plunge into the deeps. The Grimm fairy tales, he tells us in *The Owl, The Raven, and the Dove,* are profound religious tales suffused with "a diachronic ecumenical spirituality woven around love and faith." As such, they reflect in particular the religious interests of Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859), the frailer and more romantic of the brothers. The titles of Wilhelm's other works, *On German Runes* (1821) and *The German Heroic Legend* (1829), reveal a man actively in search of the spiritual meaning of his German literary heritage; Jacob, by contrast, turned to philology and became a pioneering spelunker in the labyrinthine depths of the German language. It is Wilhelm upon whom Murphy showers his attention, and it is Wilhelm who provides us with the keys to the Grimms' religious views.

According to Murphy, Wilhelm held that fairy tales are "fragments of ancient faith whose purpose was to awaken the feelings of the human heart." Where these fragments originated is a complicated matter; it is nearly impossible to trace a fairy tale to its source. The Grimms gathered their stories from oral traditions, but this does not mean that the stories emerged in pristine form from the Ur-soil of German myth; some circulated as long ago as ancient Egypt, while others made their way to Germany via the elegant French tales of Charles Perrault. The "ancient faith," then, is not a matter of a single, unadulterated heritage, but rather a blend of three religious streams: classical Greco-Roman (with traces of Pharaonic Egypt), Nordic-German, and medieval Christian, represented in turn by the three animals of Murphy's title—the owl of Athena, the raven of Woden, and the dove of the Holy Spirit.

How Wilhelm gathered these three heraldic animals into a single, coherent vision is a literary as well as a religious puzzle of the first order. Murphy's resolution of this problem comes by way of a neat bit of literary detective work. Scholars have long known about the Grimms' devotion to Christianity, the product in part of a strict Calvinistic Reformed Church upbringing. Murphy wished, however, to fill in the many gaps in the picture. He therefore tracked down the relics of Wilhelm's religious life: his two Bibles and a number of other books, theological and mythological, "which seemed not to have been opened for extensive examination since the hand of Wilhelm Grimm last closed them." Murphy's account of his most spectacular discovery is worth quoting at length, as it captures beautifully the frisson of successful literary archaelogy.

> As I . . . sat in Berlin at the Humboldt University Library, I watched the librarian approaching me with a full cart

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load of books from the Grimms' private library. I knew immediately the modest volume I had been looking for. I deliberately looked at a couple of other books first. And then I picked it up. A strange feeling came over me about looking into another person's private religious thoughts, feelings which had occurred a hundred and fifty years ago. Then I opened it, and a small shower of dark dried flower petals, color long gone, fell into my lap, along with bits and pieces of small leaves, and whole sprigs of rue, still green. It was Wilhelm's own copy of the Greek New Testament . . . and over time [he] had underlined seventy-one passages in the text.

With admirable diligence Murphy scrutinized and categorized the seventy-one passages into four themes: "The Holy Spirit," "Christ and Resurrection," "Love One Another," and "Humble Faith." Together, they establish Wilhelm as an ardent Christian of Johannine leanings, a mystic rather than a theologian, and an ecumenist who saw much of value in pagan religions insofar as they reflect in some way the light of Christ and the primacy of love.

Wilhelm's vocation thus became clear: to rewrite these tales, of mixed provenance and program, in order to bring out their Christian meaning without doing violence to the pagan content. He succeeded by writing stories in which doctrine is subordinated to feeling; in so doing he followed Luther, who, as Murphy points out, the Grimms quote at approbatory length in the entry on *faith* in the massive German dictionary, *Deutsches Worterbuch*, which they compiled:

> [Faith] is not just a type of acknowledgment in which I hold everything which God has revealed to us in His word to be true, but it is also a trust that comes from the heart which the Holy Spirit works up in me through the gospel. . . . Faith is a firm, unwavering, unshaking position taken by the heart.

IT WAS THIS POSITION of the heart, this faith rooted in feeling as well as intellect, that Wilhelm sought to awaken and proclaim in the fairy tales. In his own words: "Children's fairy tales are told so that in the pure and gentle light of these stories the first thoughts and powers of the heart may awaken and grow."

Wilhelm's decision to baptize these tales through rewriting has outraged a few critics and led to John M. Ellis' memorable claim that the Grimms produced "fakelore" rather than folklore. Murphy disposes of Ellis efficiently, demonstrating that the notion of an unvarnished oral folktale tradition is itself a fiction—literary invention is part of the mix as far back as we can see—and, more importantly, that contrary to Ellis' belief that the Grimms diluted the tales through rewriting, these stories, when first recorded by the Grimms, were often little more than ungainly skeletons. It was Wilhelm's literary genius that clothed them in beauty and the power to enchant.

He succeeded, in large measure, by judiciously inserting into each tale's pagan matrix a host of Christian imagery: water crossings that symbolize baptism, Christ in the form of noble princes, helpful doves that symbolize the Holy Spirit. Much of *The Owl, the Raven, and the Dove* consists of Murphy's reading of these symbols as they appear in five of the Grimms' most familiar tales.

Thus in Hansel and Gretel, after identifying elements of Ariadne's Thread, Yggdasil, and Ragnarok, Murphy shows how "between 1810 and 1857 Wilhelm worked and meditated on this story until he made it a classical parable of the journey of the human soul from infancy to spiritual awareness of right and wrong, the journey of human salvation," a feat accomplished largely by introducing baptismal and pneumatic imagery. In Little Red Riding Hood, the three great oak trees visible from the Grandmother's house bind into one

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image the Christian Trinity and old German myths in which the sacred oak is the place of sacrifice to Woden. Cinderella depends for its power upon the idea of the communion of saints, in which the heroine, her deceased mother, and those ubiquitous doves (ants in Apuleius' pagan original) unite in love and charity. Snow White comes back to life through the agency of the prince, Christ in camouflage, while Sleeping Beauty contains both the Harrowing of Hell and the Resurrection, as the Christ-Prince breaks through the thorn barrier that surrounds the enchanted castle and kisses the princess into life in a scene that Murphy calls "almost an alleluia of waking up on the part of all creation."

This summary can only hint at the sparkling intelligence on display in Murphy's reading of the texts. Not all his interpretations convince—that the bread and wine (bread and butter in Perrault) that Little Red Riding Hood carries to her grandmother is the viaticum rings true; that her red cap reflects the red of Pentecost seems a stretch. Overall, however, Murphy has added several dazzling layers of meaning to the tales.

One nagging worry remains—whether the Grimms' mix of pagan and Christian is tantamount to syncretism. Murphy thinks not:

> The concern of Wilhelm is with the amazing continuity over time of the act of belief, hope, and love, the goodness of the human heart and its perversity, expressed in religious poetry. Such religious feelings and poetry are older than any credal formulation, and what Wilhelm makes us realize is that they have been with us for millennia and deserve continuing reverence from Christian believers. . . . I do not think one need speak, except perhaps with reverence, of a syncretism of the feelings of the heart.

This suggests a critical distinction between theological and literary contexts, between explicit and implicit Christianity. If one enters a Christian church and finds there statues of Woden and Athena alongside Christ, one might rightly protest. But if one enters a fairy tale and finds there a raven and an owl alongside a dove, one has discovered multivalent symbols that may, if skillfully depicted by a Christian artist, retain their pagan ancestry and yet be thoroughly Christian in their literary effect. As for the Christian insertions—water, prince, dove, and the like—in crudely polemical hands such things would be the ruin of the tale, but as accomplished by Wilhelm, master literary craftsman, they breathe life—and even that life "that was the light of men"—into these "fragments of ancient faith." One can only respond with gratitude.

A Studied Faith

THE UNIVERSITY GETS RELIGION: RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION. By D. G. HART. *Johns Hopkins University Press. 321 pp. $38.*

***Reviewed by* Philip Gleason**

D. G. HART TEACHES at Westminster Theological Seminary, an institution that serves the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, a tiny denomination best known, according to a standard reference work on American religion, for its "vigorous affirmation of the truths of historic Christianity and Reformed orthodoxy." That influence shows: although Hart does not say so explicitly, his new book on religious studies in American higher education leaves the reader to conclude that such study can be effec-

PHILIP GLEASON *is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Notre Dame.*

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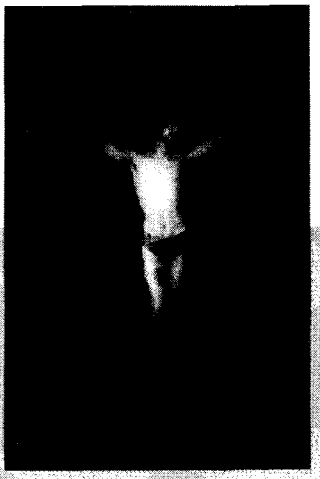

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tively pursued only in places pretty much like Westminster.

Hart's critique is embedded in a historical narrative that proceeds in three phases, becoming more frankly negative the nearer it comes to the present. The first of these phases, 1875-1925, covers the emergence of the modern university and the place of religious activities and religious studies within it. Here Hart adds depth and detail to a revisionist view of the subject that is now well on its way to becoming the conventional wisdom.

The new scholarship shows that the "university movement" in this country was not nearly so "secular" in motivation as we used to think. Rather, the principal leaders of the movement—men like Charles W. Eliot, Andrew Dixon White, and Daniel Coit Gilman—were earnest Christians who saw the university as advancing the cause of true religion. While religion may not have been their principal motivation, their religious beliefs reinforced their educational ideals and made the new university a congenial place for various forms of religious activity.

The university founders were, of course, liberal Protestants, and they (particularly White) did actively oppose religions that were dogmatic, authoritarian, or, above all, "sectarian." Hart traces the genealogy of this outlook, linking it to the influence of the Enlightenment, especially Scottish common sense philosophy, and to the stress on private judgment and the spiritual freedom of the individual, which was rooted in the Reformation but was carried to its fullest political and cultural expression in American republicanism.

The continuity—indeed, near identity—between their religious beliefs and civic ideology gave Protestant educators a sense of responsibility for the well-being of the national culture, and encouraged them to equate the progress of civilization (which universities would vastly accelerate) with the realization of genuine Christianity. They found contemporary support for this view from liberal theologians like those of Andover Seminary, whose immanentism blurred the distinction between natural and supernatural, who downplayed traditional doctrines such as the atonement, and who preached that the Christian's duty was to work for the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Since Hart describes himself facetiously as "a vinegary, rigid Calvinist," he could hardly endorse this kind of theological liberalism. However, his treatment of the first phase in the

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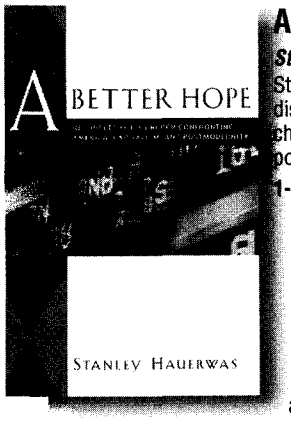

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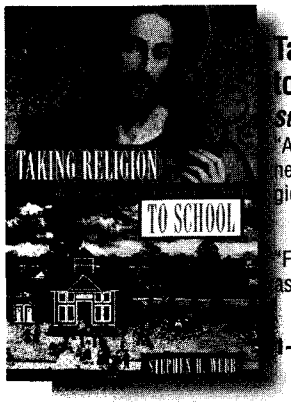

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evolution of religious studies is relatively benign. Besides exploring the intellectual roots of the movement, he provides a great deal of information about the various forms of pastoral and pedagogical activities carried on, the organizations set up to promote them, and the persons who led them. He also shows how the fundamentalist controversy of the 1920s served as a foil for the promoters of religion in the university, who stressed their nonsectarianism and dedication to academic ideals.

ONE OF HART'S recurring themes is the tension between the pastoral/spiritual aims of the religious studies movement and its commitment to academic standards of scientific neutrality in teaching and research. This tension was present from the beginning and provides the framework for later debates. Another such theme is the status of mainline Protestantism. At the beginning of the story it was so hegemonic that most people assumed that, being *the* American faith, Protestantism furnished the obvious subject matter for religious studies in the university. In fact, when religious studies programs began, they simply imported their curriculum from Protestant seminaries, emphasizing the Bible and ethics while leaving out professional courses such as homiletics.

So long as mainline Protestantism dominated the American religious landscape, its dominant status in religious studies seemed perfectly natural. That situation continued through the second phase of Hart's story (1925-1965), which traces the academic maturing of the movement and its more aggressively "religious" note. In these years, educational, theological, and broader social and political developments combined to enhance the intellectual respectability of religious studies, which became a more or less standard feature of the university scene.

The criticism leveled by Robert M. Hutchins and others at the superficiality of collegiate studies, and the resulting movement to restore the liberal arts and "general education" to their proper place in the curriculum, only helped the religious studies movement. Religion was, after all, central to the understanding of Western Civilization; for that reason, it was likewise indispensable to true humanistic learning. At the same time, the rise of Neoorthodoxy in Protestant theology—especially the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr—demonstrated anew the relevance of religious thought. That added immensely to the self-confidence with which the promoters of religious studies asserted their claims. The case for the eternal verities took on compelling force for a generation that lived through economic collapse, a war of unprecedented destructiveness, and the continuing threat of nuclear cataclysm.

Thanks to this combination of circumstances—and to the prodigious overall expansion of higher education—religious studies enjoyed its golden age in the two decades after World War II. Secure in its niche among "the humanities," religious studies prospered as the academic version of a society-wide "revival of religion." Between 1945 and 1960, the number of undergraduate programs jumped from twenty to thirty-eight, and sixteen new Ph.D. programs came into being. In 1953, the *Christian Scholar* began publication as a high-level journal dedicated to exploring issues of faith and learning in various disciplines.

HART GIVES A FULL account of this era, but argues that a good deal less was going on than met the eye. Rather he detects several kinds of hollowness at its core. True, theology in the university had figuratively ascended in status "from campus minister to assistant professor." But as an academic

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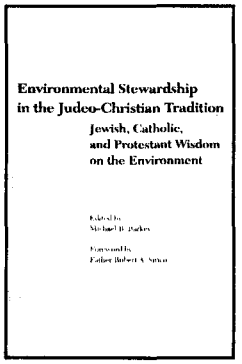

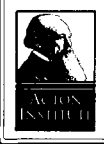

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field, it was overly dependent on a few Neoorthodox luminaries who dealt mainly in generalities concerning religion and culture, while the mass of its professors failed to build up a solid body of research on questions proper to theology as such. Hart roundly declares that "American Protestant theology at midcentury was a mirage."

Biblical studies, the curricular mainstay of religious studies, had a firmer scholarly base, but there was no consensus as to whether the Bible should be taught as the "Word of God," as great literature, or as a founding text of Western Civilization. The pastoral/scholarly tension was particularly marked in this area, as was "the sentimentality so characteristic of liberal Protestant attachments to Jesus," whose uniqueness as a religious figure was "assumed rather than proved."

Church history, something of a stepchild in the seminary curriculum and in religious studies, was also thought to be prospering in this golden age, but here too Hart diagnoses a weakness. American church history, he reports, suffered from a species of cultural captivity in that its narrative framework derived from U.S. history rather than being structured by strictly ecclesiastical developments, such as "the introduction of new religious teachings or . . . liturgical practices."

THIS LAST SEEMS more than a little strained. Indeed, Hart's appraisal of the whole movement at what he considers its zenith is surprisingly critical. Surprising, that is, until we recall that he is probing for weaknesses that help explain why religious studies fell apart in the last phase of its evolution, which he dates from the mid-sixties. By that time it was clear, in Hart's view, that the movement had failed to meet the mark academically. The scholarship coming out of religious studies departments was second-rate, and the leaders of Protestant divinity schools thought the subject pedagogically unsuitable as an undergraduate major for prospective ministerial candidates. But these were minor issues compared to the crisis brought on by the sudden realization that the whole activity, as hitherto carried on, was "sectarian." Too Christian! Too Protestant! The tensions that had been there from the outset burst forth, with the result that "religious studies secularized just like many Protestant colleges had a century earlier."

Unfortunately, repudiation of the Protestantism that had been its tacit foundation robbed the field of its

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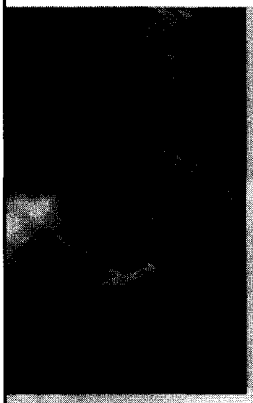

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coherence. An early symptom of the resulting hodgepodge was the transformation in 1964 of the National Association of Biblical Instructors into the inclusive, but invertebrate, American Academy of Religion. A few years later, the too-sectarian *Christian Scholar* renamed itself *Soundings* and grandiloquently proposed to make "common human concerns" its unifying theme. Curricula seemed designed on the let-a-hundred-flowers-bloom principle, and no consensus existed on the methodology proper to the discipline—or whether it even *had* a methodology.

The fundamental incoherence at the bottom of the disorder is identified by Hart as follows: religious studies derives its subject matter from the "determinations of faith communities . . . [but rejects] as unscientific the basis upon which those determinations were made." The conclusion he draws from this shrewd perception, and from the whole of his well-informed analysis, is one that believers may find "idiosyncratic and unsettling" (as Bruce Kuklick puts it in a dust-jacket endorsement): religion cannot rightfully claim a place in the university precisely because it cannot meet Enlightenment standards of rationality and scientific neutrality on which—postmodernists to the contrary notwithstanding—knowledge as the university understands it is based.

Hart is undoubtedly correct in saying that the history of religious studies shows that commitment to this epistemology inevitably dilutes religion to the disappearing point. Yet contrary to what one might expect, he is an academic fundamentalist about the propriety of the university's adherence to Enlightenment rationality and scientific neutrality—from which it follows logically enough that religion is well-off "without the blessings of the university." What does not follow so logically is why we should assume religion will do better *intellectually* at places like Westminster Seminary, where its grounding in faith is accepted. For it is not simply the case that "the university is incapable of evaluating dogmatic claims and supernaturally inspired texts." The university, rather, rejects the legitimacy of such claims as pathways to knowledge. And so long as the university sets the standard for what constitutes knowledge, faith-based scholarship cannot gain intellectual acceptance regardless of where it is produced.

Historians aren't very comfortable with matters epistemological, and Hart's skirting this kind of complication is understandable enough. Similarly, his failure to explain in detail why everything started to come unraveled in the 1960s is understandable, since that would require a book in itself. The book he has given us offers richness of information, astute analysis, and provocative interpretation. That is quite enough.

Who Is My Brother?

IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY: REFLECTIONS ON THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. By ALAIN FINKIELKRAUT. Translated by Judith Friedlander. *Columbia University Press. 133 pp. $24.50.*

***Reviewed by* Brian C. Anderson**

FRENCH PHILOSOPHER Alain Finkielkraut's subtle essay on humanism and its discontents grapples with a big question: How did the West's noble ideal of universal humanity—the belief that, beneath the particularities of race and culture, we're all brothers, duty-bound to respect one another's equal rights—fail so disastrously in the twentieth century? Unleashing the carnage of the last century were two ideological monsters: National Socialism and communism. The first killed in the name of excluding whole groups of men and women from the ranks of the human: antihumanism perfected. The second killed in the name of achieving universal humanity: humanism perverted. Because of these murderous ideologies, more than 100 million people lost their lives. Why did humanism prove so weak in the one case and fuel political atrocity in the other?

In the Name of Humanity is the seventh of Finkielkraut's books to appear in English translation and is the most unambiguously conservative in spirit. In an influential earlier work, *The Defeat of the Mind*—kind of a Gallic *Closing of the American Mind*—the author defended an enlightened

BRIAN C. ANDERSON *is Senior Editor of* City Journal, *author of* Raymond Aron: The Recovery of the Political, *and co-editor, with Michael Novak, of Lexington Books' new series,* Religion, Politics, and Society in the New Millennium.

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humanism against the forces of multiculturalism and cultural relativism arrayed against it in French and European intellectual life. Here, while far from embracing multiculturalism or relativism, Finkielkraut offers a more critical assessment of the humanist tradition, which he now believes to be inadequate as a foundation for political morality.

THE BOOK OPENS with a compressed history of the idea of universal humanity prior to the twentieth century. Painted with a wide brush, it consists of four principal stages. In the first stage—the millennia of prehistory—man reserved the title "man" only to those who belonged to his community and shared his customs. The stranger who bowed before strange gods, whose way of life was irredeemably different, wasn't fully human.

In the second stage, the Bible and philosophy—Jerusalem and Athens—gave the West the ethical and intellectual means to explode the age-old distinctions that separated people into the human and nonhuman. To the people of the covenant, Finkielkraut recalls, the God of the Bible commanded: "Every sentence you pass shall be the same whether it be on native or stranger" (Leviticus 24:22). This unprecedented "gift from on high," as the religious thinker Emmanuel Levinas calls it, made possible the recognition of men's similarity to each other beneath the dizzying variety of historical traditions. Ancient philosophy, by distinguishing the natural from the merely conventional, allowed for a kindred discovery of a single humanity. "With the rise of philosophy," Finkielkraut holds, "truth freed itself from the chains of tradition. It sought a place for itself among all reasonable souls, everywhere and in every climate."

The single humanity of the ancients, though, remained distant from the modern world's egalitarian ideal of universal humanity. The nature that the classical philosophers uncovered was an *ordered* nature, a world of high and low, and this, they argued, entailed a natural hierarchy among people: some were born to rule and some to follow and serve. (Aristotle famously defended slavery if it reflected natural differences in capacities.) Though the Christian Middle Ages promoted "a nonexclusive form of love" for each member of the human race that went beyond the ancient Greeks, Finkielkraut notes, it still believed that the universe possessed a hierarchical order, and likewise that God made distinctions between people, fitting some for mastery and others for slavery.

Over time, however, this "vertical" relation between man and man began to flatten as the ordered cosmos of the ancients made way for the morally neutral nature of the moderns—stage three. Though Finkielkraut isn't clear about this, he seems to be arguing that Christianity helped usher in the modern world as the Christian vision of human fellowship began to erode belief in natural slavery. Finkielkraut devotes several pages to the mid-sixteenth-century debate between Ginés de Sepúlveda and Bartolomé de Las Casas, two Spanish men of the church. The debate centered on what to think of the odd, feather-clad natives the Spaniards had found when they arrived in the New World more than fifty years earlier. Were these people men at all? Could the king lawfully declare war on them before preaching the gospel to them? Could they be enslaved after they became Christians? Sepúlveda believed the natives to be as inferior to Europeans as children were to adults, and hence natural slaves. Las Casas thought otherwise: the natives were different, yet their enslavement was not justified by their nature. In so arguing, Las Casas left behind the hierarchical cosmos.

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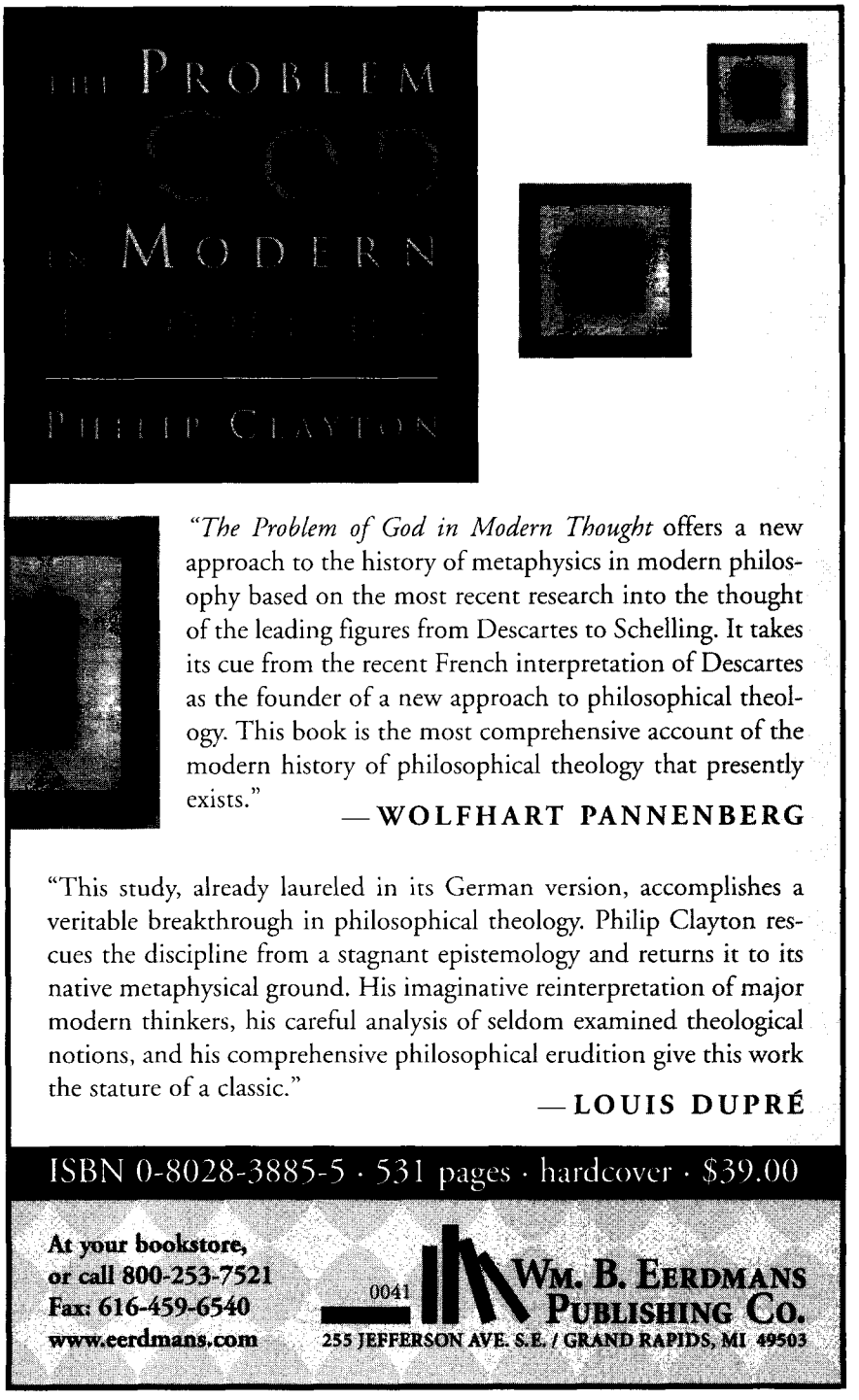
world. So how to justify human equality in this fourth stage? Finkielkraut suggests—and here his argument, expositing Pascal and Tocqueville, gets quite obscure—that it is man's imagination that fills the void left by nature and grace, creating new egalitarian social forms. Man's democratic imagination, he explains, is by the nineteenth century "climbing over the widest walls, seeping into every symbolic and geographic crack that might divide humanity." Compassion and sympathy—the imaginative identification with our fellow man—become the watchwords of the most advanced philosophy. As this new form of democratic coexistence takes root, one's brother becomes anybody, friend and foe, native and foreigner. Thus we arrive at the dawn of the twentieth century, in a West in which the concept of universal humanity had reached "its most spectacular development."

But the humanist tradition, bereft of a natural or supernatural foundation, proved at once malleable and defenseless when confronted with the twentieth century's rising tide of ideological politics. Influenced by Arendt's classic book *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Finkielkraut sees in both National Socialism and communism a "murderous denial of finitude" in which history becomes the object of a volcanic human will, unlimited by anything outside the will. For the fevered partisans of these ideologies, man made his world; he didn't receive it as given. Humanism, sharing this modern belief in man's construction of the world, had no standpoint from which to criticize events as they began their slide toward ruin.

National Socialism snapped humanism like a thin reed. Finkielkraut interprets Nazism not as regression to the old order of natural differences among men but as a revolutionary movement—a "secular religion," as the French political theorist Raymond Aron termed it. Where conservatives had focused on man's sinfulness and weakness, Finkielkraut stresses, the Nazis cast sin outward, onto the Jew, and viewed history as a project in which the racially superior would exterminate the inferior, treating them as subhuman. Stalinist communism saw history as a project, too, though its goal was to achieve at any cost the humanist ideal of universal man—an ideal it believed was written into the laws of history. If individual men resisted the progression toward this goal, so much the worse for them: the Gulag awaited.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National Socialism's crushing military defeat during World War II and the crumbling of the Berlin Wall in 1989 ought to mean that we are wiser today. Yet Finkielkraut seems profoundly ambivalent about the "humanitarian sensibilities and humanitarian forms of action" that dominate the post-totalitarian liberal democratic present. Humanism, he says, takes two forms today: the desire to relieve suffering and the promotion of the borderless world of globalization and the Internet. Neither provides a satisfactory basis for political morality.

TAKE THE DESIRE to relieve suffering. For Finkielkraut, the humanitarianism of the Red Cross or France's "Doctors Without Borders," ignoring the political causes of suffering in order better to staunch the flow of blood, is an understandable response to a century of previously unimaginable violence. But if we start looking at the world through the politically and morally neutral eyes of the doctor, he thinks, we're being as reductive in our own way as the political fanatic. Seeing in the other man "only the torments that overwhelm him," the political morality that follows ignores "his being or reason for being, the world he wants to build, the causes of his persecution and suffering, the meaning he gives to history and perhaps his death." It is to sentimentalize the human world and rob it of much that makes man dignified.

The humanism of those who celebrate the cosmopolitan universe of the Internet and globalization is scarcely more adequate, Finkielkraut feels. It substitutes the playtime of the tourist—clicking his mouse or eating foreign cuisine—for real cultural engagement. It also robs man of his full dignity and excellence, which requires a true sense of cultural, even national, belonging to flourish. The way toward the universal is through a strong sense of the particular. Finkielkraut laments a contemporary false dichotomy between superficial tourism and renascent barbarism.

In the Name of Humanity ends with an alternative to this false dichotomy: "To build a common world with a shared idea of humanity, based on gratitude." With Arendt, Finkielkraut defines gratitude as an ethos that holds that "all that is given to man and is not constructed, chosen, or desired by him is not necessarily oppressive or alienating." Gratitude would look to the past, if not with reverence, at least with respect; it would acknowledge that man is not the Lord of Time; it would embrace the fact the man appears in history as men and women, plunged into their various cultures and beliefs; it would provide a basis for a moderate humanism.

WHAT SHOULD WE THINK of this analysis of our contemporary condition? Finkielkraut writes with great skill; *In the Name of Humanity* is often poetic and moving. But at times I longed for the clarity of a historian of ideas like Isaiah Berlin or the willingness to make arguments of an analytic philosopher. Finkielkraut's style, typically French, asserts when it should argue, and too often what needs spelling out simply hangs on the page begging for development. What, exactly, is Christianity's role in ushering in the modern humanistic worldview? Finkielkraut can't tell us. Does his ethic of gratitude seek to restore a richer understanding of the excellences of human nature or look to religion as a response to the weaknesses of contemporary humanism? Or what? Finkielkraut doesn't say.

Moreover, Finkielkraut's critical acumen occasionally deserts him. Is it really true that the sentimental humanitarianism of today's Doctors Without Borders, if taken as the fount of our moral vision of the world, "may be just as cruel" as the lethal secular religions of the twentieth century? Finkielkraut can't truly believe it, but he says it anyway: it sounds impressive. Globalization and the Internet do risk eroding the world's variety and making us think we can get culture on the cheap. But the information revolution also brings wealth to people long used to economic misery, and globalization gives some men and women the only access they've ever had to high culture. Finkielkraut's view of these dramatic changes is too bleak.

Such criticisms aside, however, *In the Name of Humanity* is a significant book. Finkielkraut is right to see the weakness of an ungrounded humanism, just as he is right to call for a way of life that restores to the world a dimension of givenness. Solving the deeper problem that Finkielkraut leaves unaddressed—how such a restoration might happen—is the challenge we face today.

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Escaping Global Poverty

DEVELOPMENT AS FREEDOM. By AMARTYA SEN. *Knopf. 366 pp. $29.95 cloth, $15 paper.*

***Reviewed by* Ronald J. Sider**

DEVELOPMENT AS FREEDOM is a brilliant book by the world-famous economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, longtime professor of economics at Harvard and now Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. For decades, Professor Sen has been an influential voice on global poverty and matters concerning the poor. This book offers his comprehensive vision on the nature of development.

One of the major themes of the book is the nature of political and economic freedom. Sen argues that freedom is at once the goal of development and the means of development. Underdevelopment is "unfreedom" and development is the process of removing the various forms of unfreedom and expanding the capabilities of people "to lead the kinds of lives they value." "The analysis of development presented in this book treats the freedom of individuals as the basic building blocks."

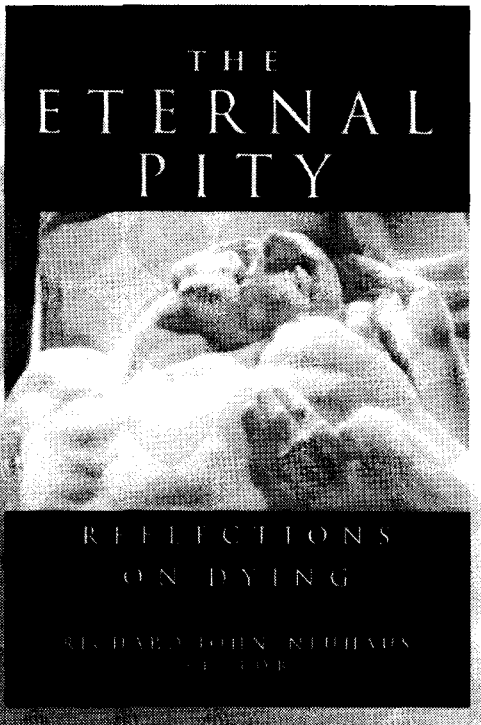
Understanding and measuring development only in economic terms (e.g., growing GNP or rising per capita income) is fundamentally inadequate because it overlooks both the fact that freedom is an inherent good and also that there are complex connections between economic growth and various kinds of freedom. A very rich person, for example, who is deprived of freedom of speech is missing something of inherent worth, but which economic analysis overlooks. Ignoring freedom can also lead to faulty predictions because of the many ways that freedom or its absence is tightly linked to economic well-being. To take a striking example, no famine has ever occurred in a functioning democracy, regardless of economic conditions.

SEN EMPHASIZES five types of freedom: *political freedoms* include civil rights, an uncensored press and free democratic elections; *economic facilities* include both free markets and access to the resources necessary to partici-

RONALD J. SIDER *is Professor of Theology and Culture at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, President of Evangelicals for Social Action, and author of* Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger.

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS, EDITOR

From The Ethics of Everyday Life Series



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pate in a market economy; *social opportunities* refer to the arrangements society makes for education, health care, etc., which greatly affect a person's ability to improve his situation; *transparency guarantees*, which require that people deal openly with each other under guarantees of disclosure and lucidity, help to prevent corruption and financial irresponsibility; *protective security* refers to the social safety net (e.g., unemployment benefits, income supplements for the poor) that prevents abject poverty. All these freedoms are essential and closely interrelated in Sen's comprehensive understanding of development, which he labels a "capability approach."

Sen's discussion of market economies and democracy illustrates how his approach offers a balance that is often missing in writings on development. He welcomes the global embrace of free markets that has taken place in the last few decades, yet he warns that we cannot depend on markets alone. Citing Adam Smith, Sen argues both that free markets are both inherently good and highly effective in increasing wealth, and also (again citing Smith) that non-market institutions are "badly needed to supplement what the markets can do." Supplement, but not replace—he insists that we cannot resurrect what he delicately terms "yesterday's follies."

The success of the East Asian economies—first Japan and more recently the other East Asian market economies—shows that there is a crucial governmental role in providing services such as widespread education and health care, which it is quite possible for governments to do successfully at a fairly low level of per capita income. Sen cites recent statistical analyses by Sudhir Anand and Martin Ravallion which show that the correlation between increasing per capita GNP and growing life expectancy works mainly through growing income for the poor and increased government expenditure on health care. Brazil and South Korea, for instance, have both experienced high GNP growth in the past four decades, but South Korea has had a much greater improvement in life expectancy than Brazil. Anand and Ravallion show that the difference lies in South Korea's greater public expenditures on health care and its smaller income gap between the poor and the rich. In fact, significant government expenditures on health care and education for everyone can dramatically improve life expectancy even at a very low general

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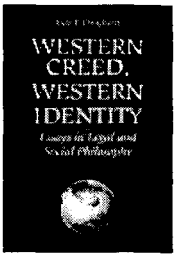

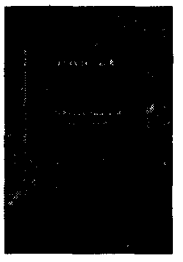
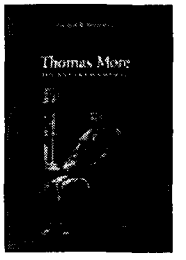

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level of societal wealth. For example, Kerala and Sri Lanka have a per capita GNP of less than $500 but life expectancy at birth is seventy-three years, whereas Brazil has a per capita GNP of more than $2,500 but life expectancy is only sixty-five. The difference is in the public expenditures, which can create what Sen calls the freedom of social opportunity.

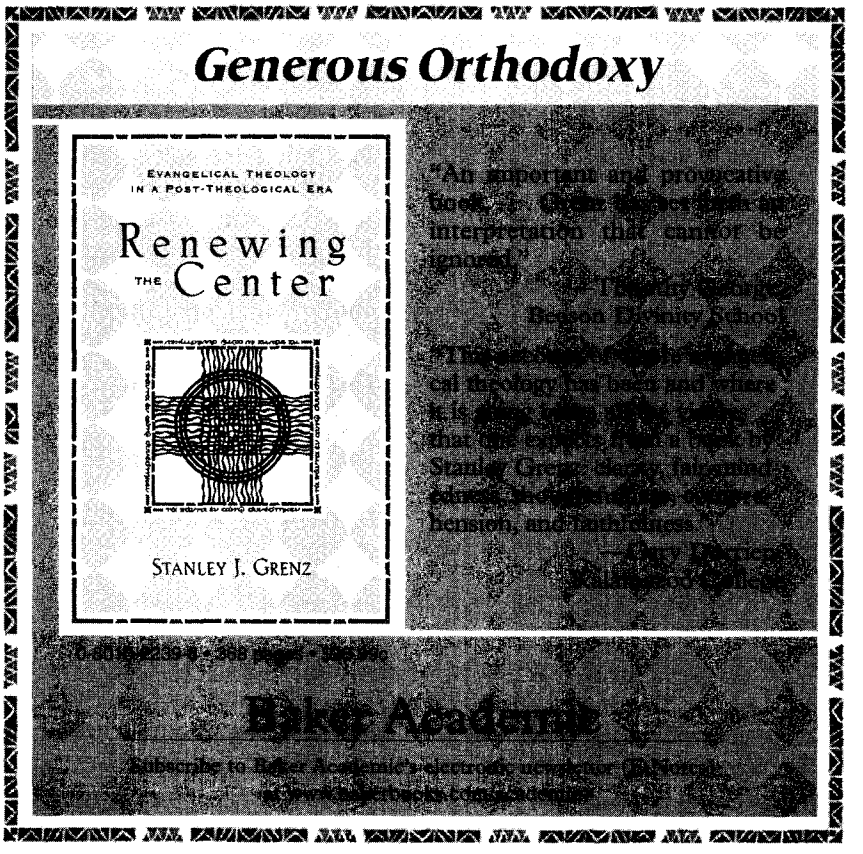
In his chapter on democracy, Sen argues that a democratic polity is important first because freedom is an inherent good, second because it contributes to economic well-being, and third because societies need free political debate to choose what economic "needs" to value. Sen says there are no systematic empirical studies that support the thesis that authoritarian governments are better able to promote economic growth. And there is positive evidence that political freedom prevents some harmful economic development. Famines have occurred in ancient and modern authoritarian societies, in colonial empires and modern technocratic dictatorships. But wherever regular elections and a free press force rulers to listen to their people, governments have always performed the relatively easy task of preventing widespread famine.

ALL THIS AND much more in this fine book I find convincing. Problems, however, emerge.

First, although it is very important to see that development includes more than merely reducing economic scarcity, it seems unhelpful to define poverty as "deprivation of basic capabilities"—i.e., the absence of freedom. It is certainly true that a rich and well-fed person in a totalitarian society suffers great loss. But does it clarify anything to call that deprivation "poverty"? The label "unfree" rather than "poor" is far more helpful in defining what needs to change. Poverty is only one—albeit very serious—problem that many human beings face. If we label all human deprivation "poverty," then we run the danger of minimizing the terrible reality of gross deficiency of food, clothing, and housing. Only if we must define development as merely overcoming poverty rather than overcoming all human deprivation is there any reason to broaden the definition of poverty as Sen does.

Second, and far more serious, is Sen's argument that a highly individualistic notion of freedom is the goal of development. He is very clear. Freedom means the capability of individuals to "lead the kinds of lives they value." This is an astonishing embrace of Western individualism, especially for a scholar from Asia. What if all living individuals choose to value consumption in a way that destroys the environment for their grandchildren? What if all the world's people choose to value fighting each other in a catastrophic global conflict? What if all individuals value their own personal gratification at the expense of the common good?

Third, Sen offers no defense of the inviolability of every human life, a central premise on which depends his admirable insistence that freedom has its own inherent value. After a century in which our science and politics have rejected any belief in the unique value of each person, surely such a sweeping claim demands substantial supporting argument. Glenn Tinder may be right when, in *Political Thinking*, he wonders whether a conviction of the innate dignity of every human being can be sustained without the ancillary claim that persons (and therefore their freedom) are valuable because every human being is created in the image of God. As a nontheist, Sen cannot take that route. But surely he owes us *some* argument supporting the central premise of his whole project.



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EQUALLY PROBLEMATIC is Sen's argument that human reason will be adequate to overcome the problem of human selfishness. He knows that a system which defines freedom as what each individual values fails hopelessly unless somehow individuals transcend self-centeredness and choose to value the well-being of their neighbors, future generations, and the environment. But Sen's only hope for this essential self-transcendence is his belief in human reason—plus the "evolutionary selection of behavioral modes." He seems to hope that even though there may be no ultimate *reason* for unselfish conern for justice and ethics, nonetheless such behavior may somehow be useful for economic success and therefore "unselfish" individuals will survive better than their evolutionary rivals. With all due respect, I must say that the experience of the last violent century, with its widespread faith in human reason and evolutionary progress, hardly warrants optimism about transcending selfishness on those grounds. I would rather gamble on God.

Development as Freedom is a brilliant book. But it needs a theistic framework, both to tell us why human freedom matters so much (even though it is not the ultimate goal but rather an essential means to the good of wholeness in all relationships) and also to remind us that persons will seldom transcend selfishness without a belief in a God who commands and enables us to love.

Newman, Yes; Paley, No

THE WEDGE OF TRUTH: SPLITTING THE FOUNDATIONS OF NATURALISM. By PHILLIP E. JOHNSON. *InterVarsity Press. 220 pp. $19.95.*

***Reviewed by* Edward T. Oakes**

IN THE COURSE of the lectures that later became *The Idea of a University*, John Henry Newman neatly described the favorite rhetorical trick of secular intellectuals: "They persuade the world of what is false," he said, "by urging upon it what is true." Newman wrote these words in 1852, seven years before Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species* in 1859; and although he expressed no disquiet at the book when it was finally published (initial reviews in the Roman Catholic press were generally positive), one must salute his uncanny insight into the ways of what might be called the "hegemonic Darwinians." For sleight-of-hand artists such as Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins, and Stephen Pinker dupe the public with this very same distracting trick.

Unfortunately for these masters of legerdemain, law professor Phillip E. Johnson has taken on a second (though related) career: exposing the forensic tricks used by these totalitarian Darwinians. The job, admittedly, is tricky: because secular intellectuals (especially those who espouse philosophical naturalism, the doctrine that says that every event in nature is caused by nature) invariably start with eminently true facts about the world, the trick for the antinaturalists is to find the false amid the true. But because the reasoning of naturalists is often subtle (or, frequently, just plain aggressive), the temptation often proves irresistible to deny the true in an effort to uproot the false, much like the servants in Matthew 13 who first wanted to tear up the weeds only to be told by their master that they would destroy his crop of wheat thereby.

It must be said that in his past writings Johnson has not always spared the wheat of evidence to uproot the naturalist weeds. Although Johnson's citations of his past writings in *The*

EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J., *teaches in the Religious Studies Department at Regis University in Denver, Colorado. His translation of Josef Pieper's* The Concept of Sin *has just appeared from St. Augustine's Press.*

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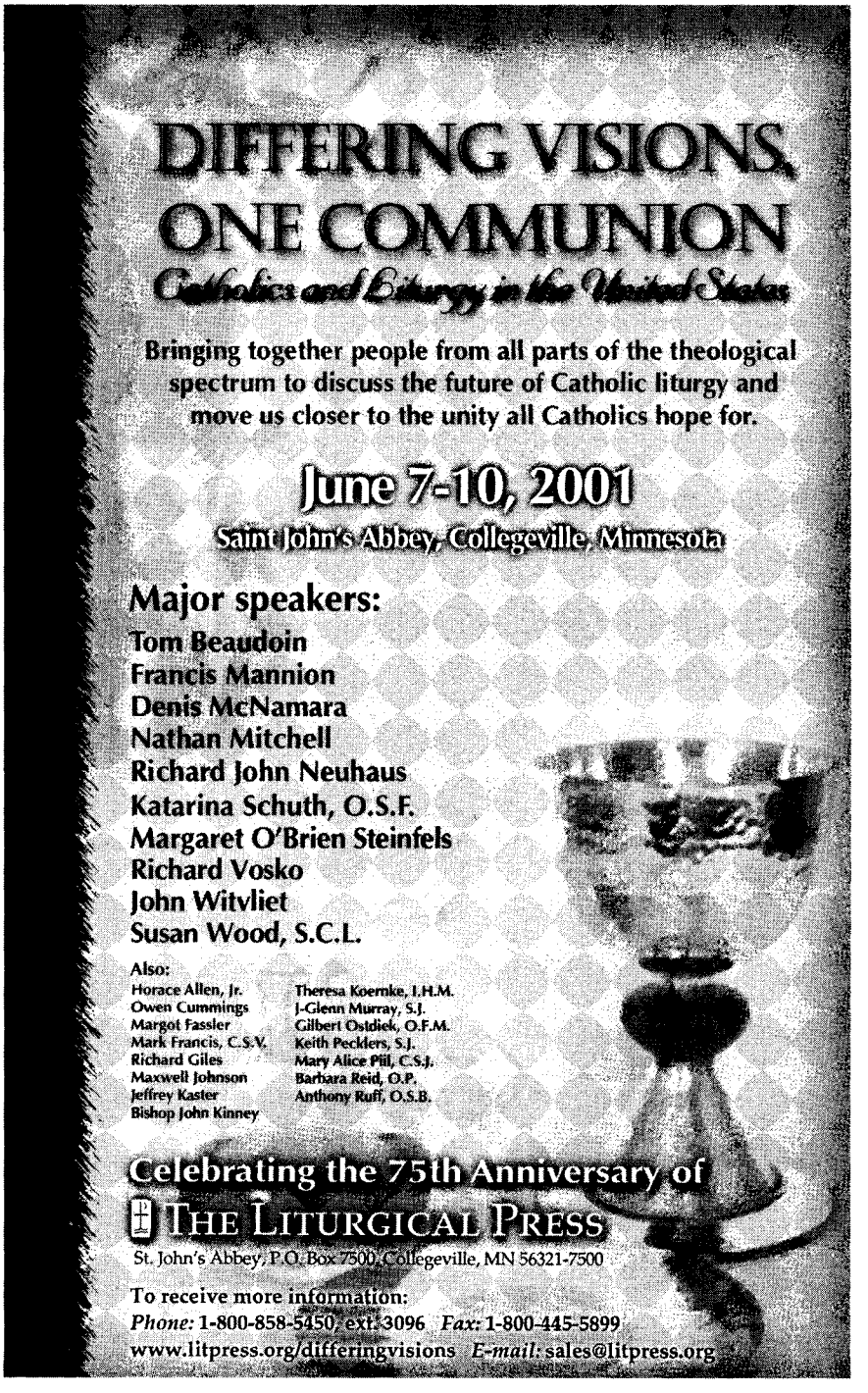
Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism imply (in the author's mind, at any rate) a continuity in his views, the careful reader will detect more concessions here to a Darwinian view of evolution than were obvious in his previous polemics. For example, he now concedes that "if nature is all there is, and matter had to do its own creating, then there is every reason to believe that the Darwinian model is the best model we will ever have of how the job might have been done." This sentence at least hints that a frontal assault on Darwinian doctrine will prove difficult, and perhaps bootless. Moreover, in a sentence that comes close to echoing Newman, Johnson admits that criticism from outside the naturalist's proper domain will work best: "Science itself requires the assistance of outside critics to check the tendency of ambitious scientists to go into the worldview business."

JOHNSON'S SHIFT OF strategies becomes most evident in his treatment of Pope John Paul II's famous letter on evolution to the Pontifical Academy of Science in October 1996. In his book *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds* (1997), Johnson had treated his readers to the rather amusing spectacle of a Presbyterian professor lecturing a Polish Pope on his dangerous flirtations with evolution, materialism, and secularism. The criticism was friendly, of course, somewhat on the analogy of the Jewish Norman Podhoretz warning the Prime Minister of Israel not to trust Yasir Arafat. Johnson even went so far as to say that the Pope had only himself to blame when the media implied that the Roman Catholic Church had capitulated to science.

Now he seems more inclined to let the Pope's text speak for itself; and in letting go of his annoyance at the Pope, Johnson makes clear that the Holy Father is merely applying Newman's generic insight to the specific question of evolution. For in Johnson's phrasing, the Pope "drew a line between 1) legitimate scientific theories based upon empirical evidence, which the Church will honor, and 2) overly ambitious manifestations of materialist philosophy, which contradict truths which are fundamental to the Church's magisterium."

True enough, but *how* we draw the line remains the sticking point, on which the Pope (quite wisely, in my opinion) offered no advice. In general (again in my opinion) Johnson succeeds best when he stands outside the whole Darwinian system *as a worldview* and approaches it with the



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forensic skills he gained from his years as a law student and professor; he proves weakest when he takes on the Darwinians in their own chosen (battle?)field of evolutionary biology. This judgment might seem surprising to those familiar with prior attacks on Johnson's work from the bulldogs of Darwinian naturalism, men who are not loath to point out that he is no biologist but "just" a kibbitzing lawyer swimming out of his depth. But then, in moments of delicious irony, many of these same men seem to stumble into embarrassed floundering when it comes to answering his objections to the specifics of their theory.

A CLOSE reading of *The Wedge of Truth* will demonstrate, I think, the legitimacy of this judgment. First, lawyer Johnson has a wonderful capacity for remembering the exact wording in the "briefs" for Darwinism written by its many apologists and can spot a contradiction in an author's writings separated by decades; and his respect for rules of evidence means that he can detect a rhetorical sleight of hand no matter how subtle the guise or intimidating the authority. In the margins of the galleys given to me for this review I would mark "Gotcha!" or "Oops!" every time Bulldog Johnson took a bite out of the pant legs of the Darwinians, and to see him on the attack is alone worth the price of the book.

My favorite passage in that regard comes from his chapter on the raw hokum purveyed under the fancy name of "evolutionary psychology," which "discipline" insists that the mind is just a collection of copycat units of mental replication called "memes" (analogous to, and pronounced like, "genes"). As Johnson rightly points out, a "memetic" account of the mind is fatal to science, "since it implies that even the scientists are not really scientists [just mindless copiers], and that their boasted rationality is really rationalization. In that case, why imagine that scientific reasoning can make true statements about ultimate reality? Extreme forms of modernist rationalism thus merge seamlessly with postmodernist relativism."

Similarly, under this rubric both "religion" and "natural selection" are memes. But what makes one true and the other false? Victory inside the brain of one meme over another? The elevation of one meme over another by state censorship? Some extreme Darwinians are fond of calling the meme of religion a "computer virus," but that implies that the very idea of religion somehow under-

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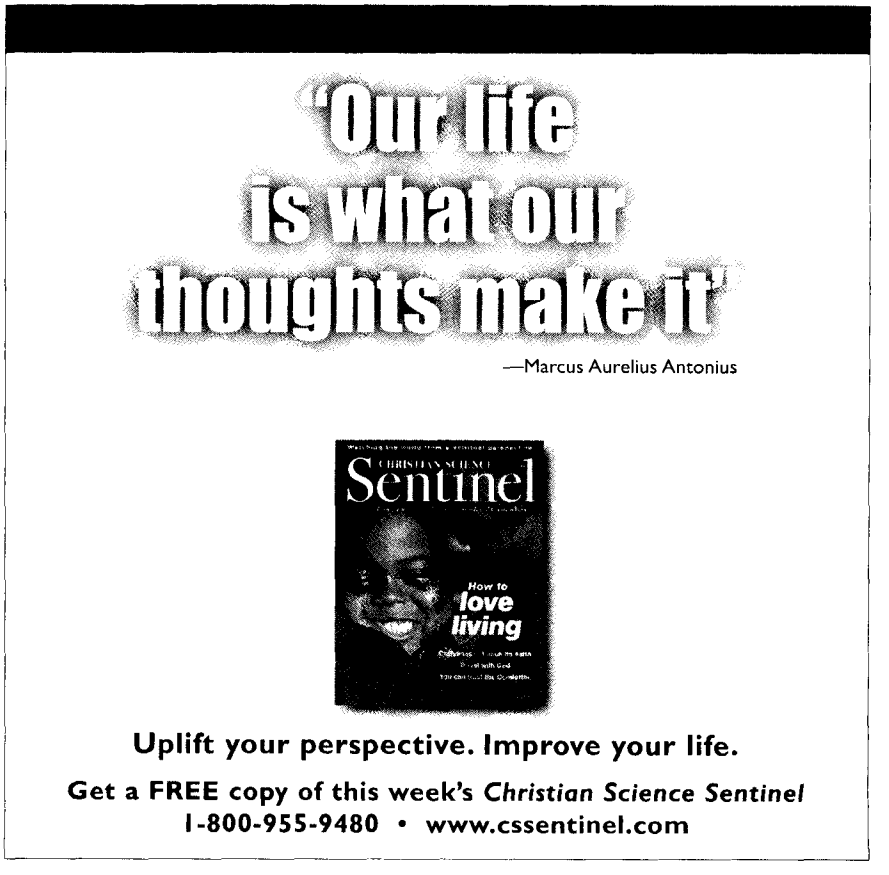
mines the efficient functioning of the human brain. Not only is there no evidence for that, even if there were, it would reintroduce the teleological question—what is human functioning for—so that one could distinguish a meme as virus from one that helps the brain correspond to reality. As Johnson pointedly asks: "If unthinking matter causes thoughts the materialists *don't* like, then what causes the thoughts they *do* like?"

All well and good; unfortunately, after having nicely roughed up his opponents Johnson fails to land the knockout punch he thinks he can claim for himself. Throughout his writings on this subject, he has explicitly aligned himself with the so-called "intelligent design" theory most famously expounded by biochemist Michael Behe and mathematician William Dembski (thinkers often afforded the hospitality of these pages). Just as the ordered and irreducible complexity of a human artifact infallibly indicates a designing artificer (no watch without a watchmaker), so too, says the theory, does the irreducible complexity of the universe—and more specifically of life—indicate an intelligent (divine?) Artificer creating and guiding the universe.

Although I do not subscribe to this theory, the space of a book review does not permit adequate treatment of this theme, so for these purposes I will grant, for the sake of argument, the truth of the theory. But if Johnson has been most successful in this book as a lawyer and not as a biologist or exponent of information theory, perhaps I can step outside Johnson's project as a whole and kibbitz as a theologian by pointing out the theological inadequacies of his strategy, *even when true*. The main problem, at least for a theologian, is that the results are so nugatory. Consider an analogy: to vary the Robinson Crusoe story, suppose I had been stranded on an island as the lone survivor of a shipwreck and was "searching for intelligent life" in that small "universe." But instead of finding the human footprint of Man Friday in the sand, let us say that I was to come upon a clearing in the forest with a circle of ten roundish stones. Even without the presence of recent ashes in the center I would know from both the form and the "irreducible complexity" of the arrangement that humans had done this work of arrangement for a purpose. But unless the ashes were recent, I would *not* know whether these artificers were still alive; and, ashes or no, I would have no indication whether these presumably living men might prove friendly or hostile.

Similarly with the intelligent design argument: Who, pray tell, is this artificer? The God of Genesis 1-3? Visitors from outer space expert in cell engineering? David Hume's clumsy craftsman who botched the job? Malign Sartrean gods who, to paraphrase Gloucester's lament in *King Lear*, kill us for their sport as wanton boys do to flies?

THE SURPRISING, indeed eye-popping, answer Johnson comes up with is: The Holy Arranger is the Logos of God, the Second Person of the Trinity. For the first six chapters, the author had been simultaneously conceding microevolution to Darwinism while barring the way to macroevolution: that is, the different species of finches on the Galapagos Islands, with their differently sized beaks adapted to the respective flora of each island, arose purely from natural selection. But apparently the divergence between elephant and tiger is too much for Johnson's imagination, and here he implies, without fully saying it, that intelligent design must be responsible for the unique architecture (or *Bauplan*, to use the standard taxonomic terminology) of the elephant versus the tiger.



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These are standard objections in the anti-Darwinian literature and are easily met (by genetics primarily, a subject not treated by Johnson here). But at least we are debating inside the world of biological controversy. Then suddenly in the seventh chapter, the author lurches, without so much as a by-your-leave, into a theological meditation on the Logos of John's Gospel, all but claiming that the Intelligence behind intelligent design is indeed the Second Person of the Trinity. Leaving aside the uncomfortable fact that no biblical or doxological text in either Judaism or Christianity praises God as the Celestial Cell Constructor or Divine *Bauplan* Architect, such a strange segue from information theory to theology could look even remotely plausible only if the bond between the *ratio* of the Divine Logos and the working out of evolution is extremely tight, so tight that one can, like some theological Merlin, read back into the character of the designer from the morphology of living beings. But in that same chapter Johnson forbids just such a move; in a sentence that out-Barths Karl Barth, he explicitly says that "a God created by human philosophy is just another idol." Thus does the lawyer himself lapse into contradiction.

The problem with this whole line of argumentation is not just that the intelligent design partisans need to reread their Hume, although they do. The man they really need to consult is, once again, Cardinal Newman, who leveled devastating artillery against the argument from design, especially in *The Idea of a University*, which despite its well-deserved fame has long gone underutilized by philosophers of religion, perhaps because his critique of their work is so devastating. In any event, he rightly calls any attempt to read the nature of God directly from the universe "physical theology," which, he says, he has ever viewed with the greatest suspicion: "True as it may be in itself, still under the circumstances [it] is a false gospel. Half of the truth is a falsehood."

THROUGHOUT Johnson's book, and indeed throughout all his writings on this subject, there lurks, like the Ghost of Christmas Past, clanking chains and all, the unexorcised spirit of the Anglican Archdeacon William Paley (1743-1805), whose lucubrations on the "clockmaker God" so impressed Darwin in his undergraduate days. In my opinion, anyone who follows that hyper-cheerful, almost Candide-like clergyman down the designer road is asking for trouble later on; and indeed once Darwin became a naturalist (in the nineteenth-century meaning of that word: an investigator and collector of species), his departure from Christian orthodoxy was well-nigh inevitable. (Think of the difference it would have made to contemporary Christianity if Darwin had read Pascal instead of Paley in his days as a divinity student.)

One concludes this book not only grateful for the Pope's letter on evolution, where all of Johnson's mistakes are assiduously avoided, but also in admiration for the Holy Father's lavish praise of Cardinal Newman in his more recent encyclical *Fides et Ratio*. For in the fewest possible sentences Newman has summarized every logical flaw in this book: "Half the world knows nothing of the argument from design—and when you have got it, you do not prove by it the moral attributes of God—except very faintly. Design teaches me power, skill, and goodness [meaning here, cleverness in craftsmanship], not sanctity, not mercy, not a future judgment, which three are of the essence of religion. . . . I believe in design because I believe in God, not in a God because I see design."

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BRIEFLY NOTED

THE CAMEL KNOWS THE WAY. By LORNA KELLY. *Self-published, available on Amazon.com. 266 pp. $18.95.*

Lorna Kelly has given us a book about Mother Teresa that shows the essence of what she really was about: being fully human by embracing humanity with all its foibles. The author, after experiencing the high life as Sotheby's first female auctioneer—and the lows of alcohol, drugs, and depression—went wandering to find the meaning of life, and ended up working with Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity for fifteen years. Upon meeting the author for the first time, Mother took one look at Kelly's red nail polish and told her to stop adorning herself in luxuries and to spend her money on the poor, to which Ms. Kelly brazenly replied that that's exactly what Judas said to Jesus. After an icy and terrorizing minute of

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silence, Mother cut loose in laughter. An unusual bond based on bare-boned honesty was forged. Kelly is refreshingly candid throughout. Somehow she got to talking with one of the Missionaries of Charity sisters about her past drug use. She told the sister that "making love on acid, well, that was something else. It felt as if we were one and that the lovemaking could last forever," to which the sister replied, "Ah, what heaven must be like!" Ms. Kelly writes of how difficult it is to confront a culture gap in India, how local residents in Calcutta all too blithely accept severe degradation, chalking it up to a karmic debt owed for a past life's mistakes. In one episode, a husband's family burnt his new wife almost to death because he didn't like her dowry. After villagers ignored her smoldering body left on the local railroad tracks, assuming it was a karma thing, the sisters picked her up and put her in Kelly's care. Kelly laments how she had to cut away burnt skin without the use of anesthetics. The woman survived, and Kelly came away permanently changed. Kelly tells us that what really counts is not that we are all on a singular journey, but who accompanies us along the way. And that following Christ's example by loving humans is what opens the heart.

— *Elizabeth MacDonald*

NATURAL LAW AND PRACTICAL REASON: A THOMIST VIEW OF MORAL AUTONOMY. By MARTIN RHONHEIMER. Translated by Gerald Malsbary. *Fordham University Press. $45 cloth, $19.95 paper.*

Martin Rhonheimer's book fruitfully engages the deeper questions and conundrums of the natural law. The book critically dispatches theories that identify genuine freedom and autonomy with subjectivism and proportionalism or "teleologism." It also well maps out a number of problems within natural law theory. For example, it gives an account of the *specu-lum*—the element of purely contemplative knowledge—that is embedded pearl-like within practical knowledge. And it sets forth an account of the "participated theonomy" that constitutes the natural law and is definitive for a true understanding of human autonomy. Rhonheimer also criticizes earlier species of natural law theory, such as that of Heinrich Rommen, that he judges to be, as it were, too "naturalistic" or physicalist: i.e., to lean too heavily upon deriving natural law precepts from nature rather than emphasizing the constitutive role of reason. Rhonheimer believes

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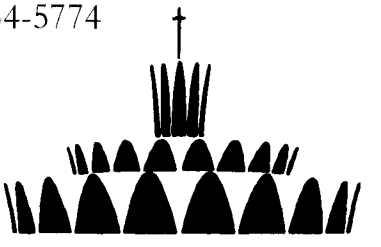

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that one cannot derive an "ought" from an "is"—a heavily criticized position. Yet in Rhonheimer's hands this view seems plausible, in part because of his trenchant criticism of its consequence—you cannot, he argues, deduce ethical norms from an understanding of human essence. He goes further, however, and argues for the epistemic priority of practical knowledge to speculative knowledge. As noted above, Rhonheimer admits that practical reason always bears within itself the speculative light defining knowledge as such. To this reviewer, these conclusions—epistemic priority of practical experience, and a speculative element within every practical knowing—seem to clash. Whether we speak of God or (as Aristotle did) of friendship, man's ends—especially the higher ones—must first be known before they can be pursued by the will. This being so, it is hard to see how reason in pursuit of an end comes before knowledge of the end. Rhonheimer's account occupies, as it were, the middle ground between an older Thomism emphasizing natural law as a speculative doctrine, and the more recent insistence of authors such as Grisez or Finnis upon the supposed independence of practical reason. Bracing and insightful arguments abound throughout this book, and one is frequently struck by the originality and freshness with which the author takes up themes in Thomas' work. This is a book that philosophers and theologians alike ought to read, because its questions are questions for all who are concerned for the doctrine of natural law.

— Steven Long

PHILOSEMITISM: ADMIRATION AND SUPPORT IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD FOR JEWS, 1840-1939. By WILLIAM D. RUBINSTEIN and HILARY L. RUBINSTEIN. *St. Martin's. 276 pp. $59.95.*

Compared to anti-Semitism, the phenomenon of "philo-Semitism"—defined as admiration and support for the Jewish people—has received relatively little attention in recent Jewish historiography. In *Philosemitism*, William D. and Hilary L. Rubinstein seek to round out the picture of modern Jewish history with a comprehensive record of pro-Jewish sentiment and action—in rallies, petitions, sermons, editorials, and diplomatic protests—by gentiles in the English-speaking world. The story of philo-Semitism is not presented as an alternative way of considering the modern Jewish experience: indeed, as the Rubinsteins show, it arose in large part in response to worldwide persecution and violence against Jews—from the infamous Damascus "blood libel," to the institution of anti-Jewish laws in Italy, to pogroms in Russia, to the Dreyfus case, and on into the Nazi era. Although philo-Semites could not stop the Holocaust, they did save many lives and help prepare the way for the creation of the State of Israel. While the Rubinsteins take into account the occasional underside of philo-Semitism (some gentiles favored Zionism in order to remove Jews from their midst), they conclude that it was overwhelmingly motivated by humanitarian, religious, and moral concerns. In its own quiet way, this brief, well-written book is a source of inspiration; like Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Israel, it provides witness to the great deeds of "the righteous among the nations."

THE BEST SPIRITUAL WRITING 2000. Edited by PHILIP ZALESKI. *HarperSanFrancisco. 353 pp. $16 paper.*

Forty essays, almost all of them elegantly written, on a wide range of topics fitting the capacious category called "spiritual." Among the better known authors are Harvey Cox, John Updike, Annie Dillard, and William Gass. There is also an essay by Richard John Neuhaus, "Born Toward Dying," that first appeared in these pages. Zaleski's discriminating taste results in a book to be kept by the bedside or wherever one indulges the impulse for a short read that occasions long reflections.

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THE LEGACY OF POPE JOHN PAUL II. Edited by GEOFFREY GNEUHS. *Herder and Herder. 128 pp. $12.95 paper.*

Five thoughtful examinations of the Pope's "contribution to Catholic thought" by John F. Crosby, Russell Hittinger, Joseph Koterski, David Schindler, and William Smith. These essays clearly establish that the "legacy" is, first, securing and advancing the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and, second, setting the agenda for the Church's faith and life in the twenty-first century.

CHRISTIANITY IN JEWISH TERMS. Edited by TIKVA FRYMER-KENSKY et al. *Westview. 411 pp. $30.*

An invaluable gathering of fourteen essays, with multiple responses, by Jewish and Christian scholars, this book represents the very best in contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue. These reflections constitute the scholarly undergirding of the historic statement on Jewish understandings of Christianity published in the November 2000 issue of FT. The exchanges are wide-ranging and candid in acknowledging both agreements and disagreements on questions such as the God of Israel and the Trinity, Christian responsibility for the Shoah, the meaning of covenant and election, differing views of redemption, and the relationship between the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Bible. Contributions by David Novak and George Lindbeck are particularly suggestive in proposing possible futures for the interaction between Christians and Jews. *Christianity in Jewish Terms* is, quite simply, an indispensable volume for those who would, two thousand years after Paul's letter to the Romans, understand the continuing promise and perplexities of the mystery of living Judaism.

WILL TO FREEDOM: A PERILOUS JOURNEY THROUGH FASCISM AND COMMUNISM. By EGON BALAS. *Syracuse University Press. 469 pp. $29.95.*

The compelling story of a young man who, in resistance to Nazism, signed up with the Communists in Hungary and Romania. After rising in the Communist hierarchy, he discovered that the enemy of his enemy was most decidedly not his friend. He was imprisoned until Stalin's death and, through much trouble, made his way to America, where he has been professor of mathematics at Carnegie Mellon since 1967. Much of the grim truth about the century past is to be found in this personal tale.

THE MANY FACES OF VIRTUE. By DONALD DEMARCO. *Emmaus Road. 226 pp. $14.95 paper.*

A collection of little essays on a host of virtues—personal, social, and sacred—by a Canadian philosopher well-versed in the traditions of both Athens and Jerusalem. Recommended not for one sitting but for putting one's life in order day by day.

THE EVIDENTIAL POWER OF BEAUTY: SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY MEET. By THOMAS DUBAY. *Ignatius. 364 pp. $14.95 paper.*

Keats said that beauty is truth and truth is beauty, and today many scientists agree that beauty and simplicity are indeed evidences of truth. Among theologians, Hans Urs von Balthasar has most notably lifted up the importance of the aesthetic. The present book serves the worthy cause of bringing together converging arguments and making them accessible to a general audience.

GOD-SENT: A HISTORY OF THE ACCREDITED APPARITIONS OF MARY. By ROY ABRAHAM VARGHESE. *Crossroad. 240 pp. $39.95.*

Beginning in the first century, and accelerating in the nineteenth, there have been some twenty thousand reported apparitions of Mary, of

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which about thirty have received varying degrees of approval from the Catholic Church. Varghese offers a popular survey of the phenomenon, including an interview with Cardinal Ratzinger cautioning against excesses of Marian enthusiasm.

The Closer We Are to Dying: A Memoir of Father and Family. By Joe Fiorito. *Picador. 321 pp. $24.*

A son keeps vigil for three weeks by the side of his hard-drinking, fun-loving, and frequently abusive father who is dying of cancer. In the long hours of waiting, and in intermittent conversation with his father who floats in and out of consciousness, he recounts the crazy and colorful stories that serve as the history of an Italian-Canadian family that never found a place to settle. The depiction of death and dying is utterly bleak and untouched by eternal hope, which is no doubt related to the author's bitter account of an Irish-dominated Church that had nothing but contempt for "wops" like him and his.

Consecrated Venom: The Serpent and the Tree of Knowledge. By Caryl Johnston. *Floris. 158 pp. $26.*

An imaginative reflection on the story of "the fall into history," in the vein of the Genesis reflections by Leon Kass in these pages. The venom, writes Johnston, is our permanent legacy; the great task is to consecrate it to truth. Written in informed engagement with current debates over the possibility of knowledge and truth, this small book will reward careful reading also by those who may dispute the author's interpretation of biblical texts.

Soul of a Lion: Dietrich von Hildebrand. By Alice von Hildebrand. *Ignatius. 322 pp. $14.95 paper.*

Reared in the most privileged of circumstances in Florence and Munich, Dietrich von Hildebrand fled the Nazis in 1933, edited an anti-Nazi newspaper in Austria until the Anschluss, and finally arrived in America in 1940, where he taught philosophy at Fordham University for many years, writing numerous and widely appreciated books on philosophy, ethics, and Catholic thought. His wife, a distinguished thinker in her own right, has written this admiring memoir, taking the story up to 1940, on the basis of Dietrich's notes made shortly before he died. In his foreword, Josef Cardinal Ratzinger calls von Hildebrand "a man whose life and work have left an indelible mark on the history of the Church in the twentieth century." Of particular historical interest is von Hildebrand's intense and complicated relationship with such thinkers as Max Scheler and Edmund Husserl, his youthful involvement with the family and cult of Richard Wagner, and his friendship with Eugenio Pacelli (Pius XII), whose adamant opposition to Nazism von Hildebrand greatly admired. *Soul of a Lion* is a valuable addition to our understanding of European, and especially Catholic, intellectual life in the first part of the twentieth century.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

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Richard John Neuhaus

Alexander Schmemann: A Man in Full

Father Alexander Schmemann (1921-1983) is one of the very important people in my life. It is not simply that he helped form some of my ideas, especially about liturgy, or gave me a feel for realities about which I knew little, such as Orthodoxy. He was a great spirit; he lived robustly; he had a confident but not corrosive disdain for the banalities of fashionable thought. He was older and more cosmopolitan than I. He was fun to be with, and one left every meeting with the sense that life could be more, and the resolve to let it be so.

As a young man I first encountered Fr. Schmemann through his books, especially *For the Life of the World, Of Water and the Spirit,* and *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy* (all published by St. Vladimir's Press). Later we would occasionally share the platform at ecumenical conferences, but I did not get to know him well until the days in Connecticut that produced "The Hartford Appeal for Theological Affirmation" of 1975. After that, I cherished Fr. Alexander as a friend and we would occasionally get together for lunch when he had business in the city, although not often enough, at least in my view. At our last lunch, on Lexington near 60th, not long before his final illness, he noted with disapproval the anorexic waitresses and expatiated engagingly on why the fashions of androgyny are part and parcel of the propensity for abstraction that is the fatal flaw of Western culture. I found the argument entirely convincing. There was for Fr. Alexander no divide between the sacred and secular, between the subjects of, for instance, unisex fashions and baptismal grace. Reality was all of a piece, and all charged with the presence and promise of Christ. In his case Tom Wolfe's phrase applies: he was a man in full. Or so he seemed, and so he seems, to me.

St. Vladimir's has now published *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemann, 1973-1983.* It is a big book of some 350 pages and, after I had finished reading it, I wished for more. Much of it is very intimate, and there is always the matter of the ethics of publishing a private journal. But his wife Juliana (the beloved "L." who appears on almost every page, Liana being the diminutive of her name) made the right decision in translating the journals from the Russian and French and putting them into book form. It is obvious that many of the entries were crafted with literary care, as though for publication, or at least as a first draft, with an eye toward publication. There were so many books that he wanted to write, and now there is a book that he may not have fully intended to write, but I suspect he would be pleased. I suspect he is pleased.

When Peter Berger and I organized the Hartford initiative, we very much wanted Fr. Alexander to be part of it, and his participation was vital to its success. He contributed an essay to the book that came out of that effort, *Against the World for the World.* It was titled "East and West May Yet Meet: Hartford and the Future of Orthodoxy." Now I discover from the journals that he was not as fully participant in Hartford as I had assumed. Right after the meeting, on September 7, 1975, he wrote, "In spite of a friendly atmosphere, I strongly felt my Orthodox alienation from all the debates, from their very spirit. Orthodoxy is often imprisoned by evil and sin. The Christian West is imprisoned by heresies—not one of them, in the long run, goes unpunished." (The Hartford Appeal criticized ideas in American Christianity that were "pervasive, false, and debilitating.") I was surprised by that entry, for in later conversations he indicated such strong support for Hartford. Maybe he later changed his mind. Maybe not. The journals do not say.

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Of the nineteen participants, he was the only Orthodox theologian at Hartford, and the problems of Protestants and Catholics were not, for him, first-order concerns. He had his head and heart filled enough with the evils, sins, and glories of Orthodoxy. "I firmly believe," he writes, "that Orthodoxy is Truth and Salvation and I shudder when I see what is being offered under the guise of Orthodoxy, what people seem to like in it, what they live for, what the most orthodox, the best people among them, see in Orthodoxy." The Russian émigrés, who did not share his vision of Orthodoxy's universal mission, were the cause of endless frustration. As were the émigrés, so to speak, from Protestantism and Catholicism who sought out Orthodoxy as an escape from history. Fr. Alexander wrote, "Since the Orthodox world was and is inevitably and even radically changing, we have to recognize, as the first symptom of the crisis, a deep schizophrenia which has slowly penetrated the Orthodox mentality: life in an unreal, nonexisting world, firmly affirmed as real and existing. Orthodox consciousness did not notice the fall of Byzantium, Peter the Great's reforms, the Revolution; it did not notice the revolution of the mind, of science, of lifestyles, forms of life. . . . In brief, it did not notice *history*."

It is precisely that escape from history that many think is the glory of Orthodoxy. But the escape is delusory. Years later, this entry: "Once more, I am convinced that I am quite alienated from Byzantium, and even hostile to it. In the Bible, there is space and air; in Byzantium the air is always stuffy. All is heavy, static, petrified. . . . Byzantium's complete indifference to the world is astounding. The drama of Orthodoxy: we did not have a Renaissance, sinful but liberating from the sacred. So we live in nonexistent worlds: in Byzantium, in Russia, wherever, but not in our own time." (Here and elsewhere, "the sacred" refers to the artificial world of religiosity, churchiness, and clericalism separated from history and everyday experience.) May 24, 1977: "Orthodoxy refuses to recognize the fact of the collapse and the breakup of the Orthodox world; it has decided to live in its illusion; it has turned the Church into that illusion (yesterday we heard again and again about the 'Patriarch of the great city of Antioch and of all the East'); it made the Church into a nonexistent world. I feel more and more strongly that I must devote the rest of my life to trying to dispel this illusion."

The only Antioch in the gazetteer today is a city near Oakland, California. Ancient Antioch is in ruins, but, Fr. Alexander complained, Orthodoxy goes on playing a churchy game of Let's Pretend. St. Vladimir's Seminary, of which Fr. Alexander was dean, is part of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), which was granted autocephaly, or its own ruling authority, by the Russian church in 1970. By virtue of his early childhood in Estonia and his later years in the Russian émigré community in Paris, Fr. Alexander also had continuing interactions with the Russian Church in Exile after he came to the U.S. in the 1950s. When in his journals he speaks of Orthodoxy in America, it is not always clear whether he means the OCA or the more hard-line traditionalists of the Russian émigré community, the line between the two being frequently blurred.

Free Time to Quarrel

Russian Orthodoxy in the U.S. he found incorrigibly quarrelsome. "The function of a quarrel is in allowing people to feel principled, to serve the cause, i.e., to feel alive. . . . And free time can be filled with a quarrel. The law of émigré life: those who don't like to quarrel organize balls and can also keep busy—endlessly—reconciling those who quarrel. And those who enjoy quarrels quarrel! But the function of both is the same." He writes, "I mainly feel like a stranger in the midst of the typically Russian 'cozy' atmosphere of the Church: Russian piety, complete self-assurance, the absence of any anxiety, any doubt, any questioning. They serve well, sing well—but they serve and sing anything well, as long as it was 'traditional'! One word missing and all would collapse. Russians accept as slaves, or deny as slaves—blindly and stubbornly."

Again and again, he returns to what is intellectually and culturally stifling in Orthodoxy. "To change the atmosphere of Orthodoxy, one has to learn to look at oneself in perspective, to repent, and if needed, to accept change, conversion. In historic Orthodoxy, there is a total absence of criteria for self-criticism. Orthodoxy defined itself: against heresies, against the West, the East, the Turks, etc. Orthodoxy became woven with complexes of self-affirmation, an exaggerated triumphalism: to acknowledge errors is to destroy the foundations of true faith." On December 23, 1976, after a series of difficult meetings at the seminary, Fr. Alexander writes: "My point of view is that a good half of our students are dangerous for the Church—their psychology, their tendencies, a sort of constant obsession with something. Orthodoxy takes on a different, ugly aspect, something important is missing, and the Orthodoxy that these students consciously or subconsciously favor is distorted, narrow, emotional—in the end, pseudo-Orthodoxy. Not only at the seminary, but everywhere, I acutely sense the spread of a strange Orthodoxy."

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A year earlier he had written: "What used to be an organic, natural style became stylization, spiritually weak, harmful. The main problem of Orthodoxy is the constraint due to style, and its inability to revise it; a prevalent absence of self-criticism, of checking the tradition of the elders by Tradition, by love of Truth. A growing idolatry." Seminarians and clergy, he said, wear their cassocks and beards as an armor against life and thought. A pseudo-Orthodoxy. A strange Orthodoxy. A growing idolatry. These are hard words. Yet, against those who attacked Orthodoxy, Fr. Alexander came to its defense. "I feel myself a radical 'challenger,' but among challengers I feel myself a conservative and traditionalist." He could never feel wholly at home in any one camp. "I cannot identify with any complete system with an integral view of the world or an ideology. It seems to me that anything finished, complete, and not open to another dimension is heavy and self-destructive. I see the error of any dialectics that proceed with thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, removing possible contradictions. I think that openness must always remain; it is faith, in it God is found, who is not a 'synthesis' but life and fullness."

Liturgy at the Center

At times it seemed that Christianity itself had been permanently marginalized. Fr. Alexander had a somewhat grudging admiration for the energy and vision of John Paul II, but doubted that he could reverse the "collapse" of Catholicism following the Second Vatican Council. November 24, 1980: "According to *human* reasoning, the whole of our Orthodoxy hasn't got a chance. If the Pope cannot cope, what about us? So, to worry about the Church that so obviously does not want to be saved by my recipes, by *our* recipes, is sinful in the final analysis: it comes from pride. For God has chosen what is totally meaningless and worthless" (1 Corinthians 1:26ff.). A month earlier, he notes that it is only in the Liturgy that things come together: "I become filled with disgust for the role I have been playing for decades. I have fear and apprehension at having to immerse myself in the affairs of the seminary and the Church. I feel that everybody around me knows what to do and how and what for, but I only *pretend* to know. In fact, I don't know anything; I am not sure of anything; I am deceiving myself and others. Only when I serve the Liturgy am I not deceitful. And I will say it again: all of life flows out of—and is connected with—the Liturgy! I feel a collapse of any energy—especially spiritual. I would like to leave!"

Such passages, and there are many of them, will come as a surprise to those who saw Fr. Alexander as the very embodiment of self-confidence. The fall of 1980 was marked by repeated reflections on the phoniness of the "roles" he had to play. But what might at times be taken for a spiritual and vocational crisis is tempered by, for instance, this on September 10: "I don't know how to evaluate these roles, what they are. Maybe simply laziness, maybe something deeper. To be honest, I don't know. I only know that this alienation does not make me unhappy. I am essentially quite content with my fate and would not want any other. In a way, I like each of these roles, each of these worlds, and would probably be bored if I was deprived of them. But I cannot identify with them. I think roughly this way: I have an inner life, but my spiritual one is kept down. Yes, I have faith, but with a total absence of a personal maximalism, so obviously required by the gospel." (In most of his reflections, "maximalism" is a pejorative, referring to the spiritual fevers of the religiously self-centered.)

The regularly recurring periods of dissatisfaction are just as regularly broken, usually by the Liturgy. February 25, 1974: "'Clean Monday'—first day of Great Lent. I spent Saturday and yesterday in Endicott, New York. Joyful impression from the services and the people. After days of inner rebellion, such a clear indication: stop rebelling, there is nowhere to go. The Church is your body and blood; you are wedded to the Church through your priesthood." For all the restlessness, ambiguities, and frustrations, there was nowhere else to go. He repeatedly invokes the phrase of Julien Green, "all is elsewhere." But he knew that this is where he belonged.

Solzhenitsyn: Great and Flawed

Among his greatest frustrations, and satisfactions, was his relationship with Alexander Solzhenitsyn. During the years of the Cold War, Fr. Alexander's sermons were broadcast into the Soviet Union by Radio Liberty, making him an enormously popular figure in Russia. Solzhenitsyn was a great fan, and when he was exiled in 1974, one of the first things he did was to ask Fr. Alexander to visit him in Zurich, his temporary home. In the following years, Fr. Alexander was often with Solzhenitsyn, including a long drive up to the Ottawa Valley of Canada in search of a place to establish a "piece of Russia" in the West, which turned out to be in Vermont. On that first visit, he and Solzhenitsyn were alone for a few days in a mountain cottage forty minutes outside Zurich. "S. is obviously a Russian *intelligent*. No comfort, no armchair, no closet. Everything reduced to a strict minimum. His clothes are those he wore when he came out of Russia. Some sort of cap, officer's boots. 'I have so many questions'—our

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conversation is prepared, he has a list of questions." Upon Fr. Alexander's return from Zurich, June 17, 1974: "Only much later will I be able to sum up what were these most significant days of my life."

The friendship with Solzhenitsyn was often rocky. Solzhenitsyn was single-minded, obsessed, and something of a fanatic, although Fr. Alexander does not use that word. He unceasingly defended Solzhenitsyn publicly from his many detractors. His private thoughts were frequently very different. January 10, 1975: "The rapport with Solzhenitsyn made obvious for me our essential difference. For him there is only Russia. For me, Russia could disappear, die, and nothing would change in my fundamental vision of the world. 'The image of the world is passing.' This tonality of Christianity is quite foreign to him." "I know that S. himself does not hesitate to offend people right and left in the rudest manner. I personally think that to defend him would be to tell him the truth. I really do not want to take part in that struggle. . . . As for Solzhenitsyn, I will defend what I heard through his creative art, but I remain free of his ideology, which for me is quite foreign." March 4: "I am thinking about Solzhenitsyn and his idolizing obsession with Russia."

In May, after just the two of them had spent every hour together for four days, Fr. Alexander reflects on the words of Jesus, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." He writes of Solzhenitsyn: "His treasure is Russia and only Russia; mine is the Church. He is devoted to his treasure in a way that none of us is devoted to ours. His faith, I think, will move mountains, while ours—mine in any case—will not. . . . A great man! In the obsession with his vocation, his mission, in the total identification with it—without doubt a great man. Truly, out of him flows strength!" Then this insight on the chemistry, so to speak, between them: "In these days spent with him, I had the feeling that I was the older brother dealing with a child, capricious and even spoiled, who will not 'understand'—so better for me to give in ('you are older, so give in!') for the sake of peace, agreement, and in the hope that 'he might grow up and understand.' I am a student from a higher grade dealing with a younger one for whom one needs to simplify, with whom one has to speak 'at his level.'"

Ecumenism: Travels in Another Country

Fr. Alexander and I discussed whether he had ever thought of becoming Roman Catholic. As a young man in Paris, he said, he mused about it, but it probably had more to do with Paris being a city of the Catholic West than with the Catholic West. My impression is that there was never a serious wrestling with the question, as in a crisis, although he drew deeply on the Catholic theology that informed the Second Vatican Council. In these journals of his mature years, interest in Western Christianity is very limited. He was intensely engaged ecumenically—lecturing and consulting everywhere, it seems—but these were travels in another country. Catholicism, especially in its Jesuit expression, he found distasteful for its preoccupation with rules, whether in enforcing them or breaking them. He cites favorably this from Leon Bloy: "It seems to me that St. Ignatius' *Exercises* correspond to the 'Method' of Descartes. Instead of looking at God, one looks at oneself. . . . Psychology invented by Jesuits: a method consisting in continually looking at oneself in order to avoid sin. It is contemplating evil instead of contemplating goodness. The devil substituting for God. This seems to be the genesis of modern Catholicism."

In 1976 he lectures for eight days at the Lutheran seminary in Chicago. "In all our conversations with students and professors I am struck by their unconscious tendency to follow fashion, to achieve success. They seem to need to 'dress like everybody else'—the same in theology." A few days later, he lectures at the Liturgical Institute of Valparaiso University, another Lutheran center. This moves him to try to formulate the difference between Orthodoxy and Western Christianity. "Put simply: the Orthodox man begins with the 'end,' with the experience, the breakthrough, the very reality of God, the Kingdom, Life—and only afterwards does he clarify it, but in relation to the experience he has had. The Western man rationally arrives at and evokes the 'end' from a series of premises. The Orthodox often expresses that 'end' quite poorly in theology. For the Westerner, the end somehow disappears, is diluted in elaborate constructions. (I need to express this problem better.)"

A year later, March 15, 1977: "Religion needs a temple, not the Church. The temple's origin is religion. Thus in the Gospel: 'I will destroy this temple. . . .' The Church has a Christian origin. However, our Church has identified itself long ago with the 'temple,' has dissolved itself in the temple, and (this means) has returned to the pagan temple as its religious sanction. Protestantism was an attempt to save the faith, to purify it from its religious reduction. But the Protestants have paid a heavy price for denying eschatology and replacing it with personal individual salvation; and therefore, essentially, denying the Church. The greatest anachronism, on a natural level, was to be found in the Catholic Church. Catholicism was possible only while one was able to deny and limit the freedom of the person, the basic dogma of the new times. While trying to change its

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course, to merge with freedom, Catholicism simply collapsed, and I do not see how its revival could be possible (unless fascism can get hold of the human race and deny the explosive synthesis of freedom and the person)." Packed into that paragraph are, I believe, Fr. Alexander's core convictions about Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Protestantism, and they reward reflection, whatever one's ecclesial allegiance.

The Great Errors

If he complained about Orthodoxy living in an ahistorical world of religious Let's Pretend, it was not because he thought the Church had that much to learn from history, especially the history of the West. April 6, 1977, and he has been reading about courses in Great Western Ideas: "It would be useful to teach a course entitled 'Great Western Errors,' following approximately this plan: Rousseau and 'Nature,' with a capital N; The Enlightenment and 'Reason,' capital R; Hegel and 'History,' capital H; Marx and 'Revolution,' capital R; and finally, Freud and 'Sex,' capital S—realizing that the main error of each is precisely the capital letter, which transforms these words into an idol, into a tragic *pars pro toto*." The protest of Fr. Alexander's life and thought was against the closures of totalism—whether political and ideological totalism, as in totalitarianism, or the total explanations proposed by theology or philosophy. Only Christ is total, he insisted, and Christ is unlimited openness.

In February 1979, Fr. Alexander is entranced by the appalling fanaticism of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, and at the same time thinking about John Paul II's visit to New York. "So at the end of the twentieth century, here is the power of religion! What else could mobilize so many millions of people; provoke such expectation, such enthusiasm? The power, and, at the same time, the ambiguity of the Ayatollah; not one word about love, peace, the transcendence in God of all petty divisions. And the threat of a holy war. The Pope, in a sense, speaks only about love. Frightening face of Islam . . . hence, this Khomeini in the end will give nothing to his people (who are so happy with him) except grief, hate, and suffering. Whereas from the Pope's visit, only joy, only hope—even if nothing comes of it." And in the end Fr. Alexander suspected that not much would come of it—for the renewal of Catholicism, of the West, of the world.

Later that year, in October, he is lecturing at the Catholic Union in Chicago. He comments on the determinedly fashionable Jesuits and Franciscans, other priests and nuns, all in glaringly multi-colored lay clothing, all demonstrating that they are "with it," and all quite indifferent to the renewal for which the Pope is calling. He reflects that in 1870, when infallibility was defined, there was the schism of the Old Catholics. "But at that time, the great majority of theologians were ultramontane and the schism was hardly noticed. Whereas *now*, it is not just a majority but theology as a whole, the whole *thought* in Catholicism that is against the monolith, against the papacy as it is now. After only a week of the unheard of triumph of the Pope and the papacy [during the New York visit], these Jesuits and nuns look and behave as if 'nothing was the matter,' as if all of it had nothing to do with them. They are not even angry, or sad, or hopeless." On the one hand, the spiritual resurgence led by the Pope; on the other, the complacent progressivism of the Catholic theological establishment. One or the other would prevail, thought Fr. Alexander, leading to a schism that would make 1870 pale by comparison.

He was deeply disillusioned by academic theology. In his last years, he said he had stopped reading theology altogether, except for the papers and dissertations that his position required him to read. I told him about the admirable work of Wolfhart Pannenberg on eschatology, a subject very dear to him, and he was glad to hear about it, but he was not interested in reading tomes such as Pannenberg's. His serious reading was in literature, especially Russian and French. May 21, 1975: "Rather than ideas and ideologies, I prefer the concrete, live, unique. When reading French contemporaries—Loisy and company—I am mainly interested in them as people, not so much in their ideas. What did the celebration of Mass mean to Loisy with all his ideas?. . . I am convinced that no general ideas can explain reality, so they are unnecessary—for me, anyway."

He still went to theological conferences and consultations, as, for example, one organized in Geneva by the World Council of Churches. September 25, 1980: "A sort of nominal, unnecessary, and fruitless game. The subject is 'Preaching and Teaching Christian Faith Today.' Thirty people—some professionals from Geneva who can talk about anything, who have learned to perfection the technique of this sort of 'consultation.'" Theologians are professionals who can talk about anything. A subclass of the chattering class, as it were. Repeatedly he writes, as on October 6, 1975, "My dream is to write for the people, not for theologians. And when I find that it works—what joy!"

Then, on October 13, 1977, perhaps as succinct a statement of Fr. Alexander's theology as is to be found: "I realized that 'theologically' I have one idea—the eschatological content of Christianity, and of the Church as the presence in *this* world of the

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Kingdom, of the age to come—this presence as the salvation *of* the world and not escape *from* it. The 'world beyond the grave' cannot be loved, cannot be looked for, cannot be lived by. Whereas the Kingdom of God, if one tastes it, be it a little, cannot be not loved! Once you love it, you cannot avoid loving all creation, created to reveal and announce the Kingdom. This love is already transfigured. Without the Kingdom of God being both the beginning and the end, the world is a frightening and evil absurdity. But without the world, the Kingdom of God is incomprehensible, abstract, and in some way absurd."

The Sources of His Thought

In the afterword to the journals, Fr. John Meyendorff, Fr. Alexander's successor as dean of St. Vladimir's, writes that Fr. Alexander's theological worldview was essentially shaped during the Paris years, and under the influence of Catholic thinkers such as Jean Danielou and Louis Bouyer. "It is from that existing milieu," writes Fr. Meyendorff, "that Father Schmemann really learned 'liturgical theology,' a 'philosophy of time,' and the true meaning of the 'paschal mystery.' If the legacy [of these French Catholics] was somewhat lost within the turmoil of postconciliar Roman Catholicism, their ideas produced much fruit in the organically liturgical and ecclesiologically consistent world of Orthodoxy through the brilliant and always effective witness of Fr. Schmemann." The journals leave no doubt that Fr. Alexander was not nearly so confident of the effectiveness of his witness, and certainly had no illusions about his vision flourishing in Orthodoxy.

Throughout Fr. Alexander's books, and especially the journals, is a running polemic against religion, as distinct from authentic Christianity centered in the revelation of God in Christ. The unspeakably tragic error, he insisted, was to think that Christianity is a subcategory of "religion," when in fact Christ explodes from within history all human constructions of reality, religious or otherwise, thus illumining with the divine the world of which we are part. I have not gone back to check out all the books, and I never asked him about it, but it is striking that in the journals there is no reference to Karl Barth. In twentieth century theology, that running polemic that pits Christ against religion is most closely associated with Barth. One wonders if there was not some significant influence, or, quite possibly, Fr. Alexander arrived at these insights on his own. He clearly had no use for the proponents of "religionless Christianity" who had their fifteen minutes in the 1960s, but he just as clearly wanted to distance Christ and Christianity from what he viewed as the stifling habits and thought forms of "religion." Even "piety" is regularly dismissed as a distortion, and he rails against those who came to confession with all sorts of complicated "spiritual problems." (He spent endless hours hearing confessions, and hated it.) His answer to the scrupulous and the spiritually self-preoccupied was, "Live!" Which is to say, his answer was, "Christ!" Although Barth is not mentioned, and maybe was never seriously read, Fr. Alexander's thought was, in important respects, strikingly Barthian. Barthianism with a real Church and a real Liturgy.

Inviting Argument

And now I have reflected on *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemann* in a somewhat thematic manner. But I cannot leave the subject without relaying a few more of his scattered observations, some of them aphoristic in form, all of them suggestive, all of them worth thinking about, and some of them, to be sure, inviting vigorous argument. For instances: "At the hour of death, what will remain of life is a unique vision of an unchanging altar, an eternal gesture, a continuous melody." The poet Joseph Brodsky, a Jew, gave a reading in New York, and afterwards a Jewish man asks him why he uses so much Christian symbolism in his poetry. "Because I am not a barbarian," Brodsky responded. Fr. Alexander: "Who invented the idea that religion is the resolution of problems? [Authentic] religion is always a transfer to another dimension, another level, and is therefore the annihilation of problems, not their solution. Problems also come from the Devil, who filled religion with his fuss and vulgarity—thus religion became a problem in the modern world."

"Eternal life is not what begins after temporal life; it is the eternal presence of the totality of life." "There is no point in converting people to Christ if they do not convert their vision of the world and of life, since Christ then becomes merely a symbol for all that we love and want already—without Him." Upon reading one of his favorite French authors: "He writes in such a way that I begin to regret I was not part of his life, nor he of mine. But that I was not part of Hegel's or Kant's life leaves me completely indifferent. The gift of life is in inverse proportion to the gift of ideas."

After walking by the Seine in Paris: "Europe's dream is ending; its ground is breaking. Europe is becoming a pitiful caricature of America, unable to become the 'original,' but an imitation denying its own originality. . . . The real France wants to become America. America does not want to become Europe, therefore it is genuine, whereas Europe is steadily losing its genuine character." He admires the simplicity of a presidential inauguration (Jimmy Carter's) and the

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peaceful transfer of power. "But what delights me is America, its deep essence, America which has found—alone in the whole world—a formula, almost miraculous, of government and society not turned into idols, but combining living tradition with life. I thought again of Solzhenitsyn: here is what he should look at, research, humbly learn from. But no! only *they* can teach the world from under the rubble, only *they* know! Neither S. nor, in general, Europeans will ever try to understand."

But then there is the American principle of equality, also between the sexes. "In that sense, our culture is demonic, for at its basis is comparison. Since comparison always, mathematically, leads to the experience and the knowledge of inequality, it always leads to protest. Equality is based on the denial of distinctions, but since they exist, the wish for equality calls to fight them, to force equalization on people, and, what is even worse, to refuse these distinctions, which are the essence of life. The person—man or woman—who hungers for equality is already emptied and impersonal because a personality is made of what distinguishes it from others and not submitted to the absurd law of equality. To the demonic principle of comparison, Christianity opposes love. . . . Equality cannot exist in this world because the world was created by love and not by principles. And the world thirsts for love and not equality." At another place: "Man looks for rules; a woman knows exceptions. But life is a continuous exception to rules. Wherever there is genuine life, there reigns not a rule but an exception. Man fights for rules. Woman has a living experience of the exception."

Another afternoon in the confessional: "Students' confessions. Always sex. I am beginning to think that this sin is useful; otherwise they would consider themselves saintly and plunge into guruism. As it is, they are half convinced [of their spiritual achievements]. So this sting in the flesh is useful. It cuts us down to size." He could not work up in himself the outrage against homosexuality that some thought appropriate, but it seemed to him very sad. "The question is not at all whether it is natural or unnatural, since this question is generally inapplicable to fallen nature, in which—and this is the point—everything is distorted, everything, in a sense, has become unnatural. . . . Homosexuality is a manifestation of the 'thorn in the flesh' which tortures in various ways, but tortures every one. In the fallen world nothing can be 'normalized,' but everything can be saved." He reads Proust, Gide, Julien Green, and reflects on "the frightening burden of homosexuality." "I think what matters most is the sense of a dead end, of insatiable thirst which cannot be transformed into life. At the end, there is not only a wall but a mirror. In the fallen world, everything strictly sexual is ugly, distorted, base. In a 'normal' human being, there is at least the possibility of transforming the ugliness and thus eliminating it. For homosexuals, this possibility, this promise, this appeal, this door—do not exist."

There is this strange dialectic, of knowing faith in the encounter with unfaith. "Why do I enjoy so much reading those who have renounced faith, who believe in their nonbelief—Loisy, Roger Martin du Gard, Gide, Leautaud, etc.? I think that in them the genuine meaning of my faith is revealed to me. All that they deny I deny also, and then not only what my faith affirms but what its presence clearly implies is revealed to me." Why is a world formed by Christianity now rejecting Christianity—with its understanding of cosmos, history, and ultimate promise—while embracing impossible dreams of human happiness? "Christianity has lost *joy*—not natural joy, not joy-optimism, but the divine joy about which Christ told us that 'no one will take your joy from you.' Only this joy *knows* that God's love to man and to the world is not cruel; knows it because that love is part of the absolute happiness for which we are all created. . . . The paradox of the history of Christianity: having ceased being eschatological, it made the world eschatological."

I could go on, and I have. But I do hope others will want to read the journals, although perhaps not with an interest as intense as those who received the gift of knowing him personally. I am grateful that he was part of my life, and I, at least in a minor way, part of his. His son, the distinguished journalist Serge Schmemann, writes in the foreword: "Fr. Alexander was diagnosed with terminal cancer on September 21, 1982. After several months of silence in the journal, he made one final entry on June 1, 1983, describing how even those months became, in the end, almost a celebration. Six months later, he died at home in Crestwood, New York, with his family and colleagues around him. His last words, after receiving Holy Communion a day earlier, before lapsing into a coma, were 'Amen! Amen! Amen!'"

In that final entry of June 1983, Fr. Alexander wrote, "For eight months I have not written in this journal. Not because I had nothing to say; on the contrary, never, I believe, did I have so many thoughts and questions and impressions; but because I was constantly afraid of the height where my sickness had lifted me, afraid of falling from it." There follow words of gratitude for family and friends, and then this final line of *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemann*:

"What happiness it has all been!"

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AMUSED BY EVIL

Imagine an American citizen who, bankrolled by millions of dollars from the Soviet Union, spent his entire life as an apologist for Communist oppression, including Stalin's murder of many millions by planned famine and the terror of the gulag archipelago. The same citizen was, beyond dispute, actively engaged in encouraging espionage on behalf of the Soviet Union, and to his dying day advocated the revolutionary replacement of the American government by a Communist regime. Surely such a person would be held in deepest opprobrium by all Americans. Think again.

Gus Hall, general secretary of the Communist Party in the U.S., died at age ninety, and Victor Navasky, editor of the *Nation*, memorializes him on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* by attacking J. Edgar Hoover, who believed that Hall was an agent of the Soviet Union, which he was. Mr. Navasky is exercised by "a new cadre of Cold War historians" who claim that the Communist Party was "at the center of a nest of spies," which it was. That is not all that upsets Mr. Navasky: "Hall was seized in Mexico City and abducted back across the border without the formality of an extradition hearing. In the domestic Cold War, the Communists were not the only lawbreakers." The Soviet Union that Gus Hall served so loyally may have murdered fifteen million kulaks and starved ten million Ukrainians to death and killed another ten million in the gulag, but the U.S. failed to give Mr. Hall an extradition hearing. This is an implied moral symmetry of a very low order.

More remarkable still is an editorial appearing in the same edition of the *Times*, titled "America's Bolshevik." The encomium, and that is what it is, begins with this: "Don Quixote himself might have despaired at the prospect of leading America's Communist Party during the Cold War, but not the indefatigable Gus Hall. His life story, improbably enough, is a genuine American tale." Hall was born in Minnesota, and the editors speak admiringly of "his understated Midwestern manner, even after he became a New York character and an odd kind of international celebrity." It is all very amusing, really. "Mr. Hall was on the wrong side of history, and stayed there with what ultimately became a comical consistency."

The editors note that he "never attempted to transform the party of the proletariat into a more trendy leftist alternative. That would have offended his native Midwestern stubbornness." The editors do not note that, had he chosen a more trendy leftist alternative, he might have won greater support from the *Times*. As it is, the very cosmopolitan editors, with condescending reference to the proletariat and the Midwest, view him simply as Good Old Gus, "a New York character," "a genuine American tale." Was he a Communist? An apologist for the bloody slaughter of millions? A declared enemy of the American government and a paid agent of its declared enemy? Well, maybe so, if you insist. But insist too much and you might be thought humorless; you might even be suspected of being an anti-Communist.

The Soviet Union produced more corpses than any other regime in history, more even than Nazi Germany under Hitler. Imagine, if you can, an ironically amused editorial encomium to an American who all his life loyally served the Nazi cause; an editorial describing him as a "Don Quixote" whose "indefatigable" devotion "is a genuine American tale." More than a decade after its end, the editors of the *New York Times* still cannot bring themselves to speak simple truth about the evil of the most murderous movement in human history, or about those who devoted their lives and betrayed their country in serving that movement. With respect to history and moral judgment, the *New York Times* was and is on the wrong side, and stays there with pitiable consistency.

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AN EVANGELICAL CHARTER FOR A NEW CENTURY

During the Jubilee Year 2000, media attention understandably focused on the many events in Rome, such as the "cleansing of memories" service at the beginning of Lent and the extraordinary Jubilee gathering of two million young people in August. When the planning began several years earlier, John Paul II made it clear that he wanted the observance of the Jubilee Year to be thoroughly ecumenical. And there were such ecumenical moments, notably at the opening of the great doors at St. Peter's. But, as spectacularly successful as the year was in almost every other respect, it must be admitted that it was very largely a Catholic observance.

There are many reasons why that was the case, a major reason being that the sheer size, vitality, and organizational strength of Catholicism is intimidating to other Christian groups. They are invited to cooperate, and frequently want to cooperate, but they fear being co-opted. There have been significant

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advances toward greater Christian unity in recent decades, but it is still the case that communities of self-identified affinity have greater confidence when they are gathering with their own. Which brings us to another extraordinary, and extraordinarily promising, event of the Jubilee Year.

At the initiative of Dr. Billy Graham, some ten thousand evangelists, theologians, mission strategists, and church leaders from more than two hundred countries gathered in Amsterdam to pray and plan for world evangelization. This great gathering is in continuity with earlier assemblies in Berlin (1966), Lausanne (1974), Amsterdam (1983), and Manila (1989). As with earlier meetings, this one issued a major statement, "The Amsterdam Declaration: A Charter for Evangelism in the Twenty-first Century." The statement is, I believe, cause for encouragement in a number of ways.

What is meant by "evangelicalism"? That is a question often asked, and the opening two sentences of the preamble provide a very helpful answer. "As a renewal movement within historic Christian orthodoxy, transdenominational evangelicalism became a distinct global reality in the second half of the twentieth century. Evangelicals come from many churches, languages, and cultures, but we hold in common a shared understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, of the church's mission, and of the Christian commitment to evangelism." Evangelicalism is not a church nor a denomination nor what Catholics call an ecclesial communion, but a renewal movement. It is a renewal movement within historic Christian orthodoxy. It does not claim to be exhaustive of or coextensive with historic Christian orthodoxy. In other words, separatism is no part of evangelicalism's self-definition.

In fact, quite the opposite is the case. Under the title "Christian Unity and Evangelism," the Amsterdam Declaration says this: "Jesus prayed to the Heavenly Father that his disciples would be one so that the world might believe. One of the great hindrances to evangelism worldwide is the lack of unity among Christ's people, a condition made worse when Christians compete and fight with one another rather than seeking together the mind of Christ. We cannot resolve all differences among Christians because we do not yet understand perfectly all that God has revealed to us. But in all ways that do not violate our conscience, we should pursue cooperation and partnerships with other believers in the task of evangelism, practicing the well-tested rule of Christian fellowship: 'In necessary things, unity; in nonessential things, liberty; in all things, charity.' We pledge ourselves to pray and work for unity in truth among all true believers in Jesus and to cooperate as fully as possible in evangelism with other brothers and sisters in Christ so that the whole church may take the whole gospel to the whole world." That is an altogether heartening statement, and should be a great encouragement to all who have over the years supported initiatives such as "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" (ECT).

On the relationship with other religions, the Declaration says: "Because God's general revelation extends to all points of His creation, there may well be traces of truth, beauty, and goodness in many non-Christian belief systems. But we have no warrant for regarding any of these as alternative gospels or separate roads to salvation. The only way to know God in peace, love, and joy is through the reconciling death of Jesus Christ, the risen Lord. As we share this message with others, we must do so with love and humility, shunning all arrogance, hostility, and disrespect. As we enter into dialogue with adherents of other religions, we must be courteous and kind. But such dialogue must not be a substitute for proclamation. Yet because all persons are made in the image of God, we must advocate religious liberty and human rights for all. We pledge ourselves to treat those of other faiths with respect and faithfully and humbly serve the nation in which God has placed us, while affirming that Christ is the one and only Savior of the world." Readers will recognize that, in important respects, that parallels the recent declaration from Rome, *Dominus Iesus* (Jesus the Lord). Critics to the contrary, these parallels underscore that the Roman declaration serves ecumenism among all who adhere to "historic Christian orthodoxy." The essential truth held in common is that there is one God and one universal plan of salvation revealed in Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

What Is Meant by "Church"

Particularly striking is the section of the Amsterdam Statement titled "Definitions of Key Terms." It is frequently observed that the most divisive disagreement between evangelicals and Catholics is in the area of ecclesiology, or the doctrine of the Church. Here is what Amsterdam says about the Church: "The church is the people of God, the body and the bride of Christ, and a temple of the Holy Spirit. The one, universal church is a transnational, transcultural, transdenominational, and multiethnic family, the household of faith. In the widest sense the church includes all the redeemed of all the ages, being the one body of Christ extended throughout time as well as space. Here in the world, the church becomes visible in all local congregations that meet to

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do together the things that according to Scripture the church does. Christ is the head of the church. Everyone who is personally united to Christ by faith belongs to his body and by the Spirit is united with every other true believer in Jesus."

It is not too much to say that Catholic doctrine is in accord with almost every word of that definition. This does not mean there is complete agreement. Not by a long shot. For instance, for Catholics, the "local church" is the people, priests, and deacons gathered around a bishop in apostolic succession and in communion with the Bishop of Rome. And, of course, Catholics do things—notably all the sacraments, which we believe to be "according to Scripture"—that evangelical Protestants do not do. But the great achievement here is that evangelicalism affirms a scripturally grounded conceptual framework that is shared by all who lay claim to historic Christian orthodoxy, thereby providing common points of reference for the continuing and candid engagement of our agreements and disagreements.

Also praiseworthy are the Declaration's definitions of such constitutive realities as "Kingdom," "Gospel," and "Salvation." Then there is this on what is meant by "Christian": "A Christian is a believer in God who is enabled by the Holy Spirit to submit to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior in a personal relation of disciple to master and to live the life of God's kingdom. The word Christian should not be equated with any particular cultural, ethnic, political, or ideological tradition or group. Those who know and love Jesus are also called Christ-followers, believers, and disciples." When the first ECT statement was issued in 1994, the most vigorously contested assertion in some evangelical circles was the claim that evangelicals and Catholics are "brothers and sisters in Christ." The Amsterdam Declaration could not be clearer in its affirmation of that great truth.

Of course there is not in evangelicalism an institution of magisterium, or teaching authority, comparable to that of the Catholic Church. Evangelicalism is notoriously fissiparous, as are most movements, and there are undoubtedly many evangelicals who would protest this or that in the Amsterdam Declaration. Yet a gathering as large and representative as Amsterdam, under the auspices of the world's leading evangelicals, does possess real teaching authority. It is a guiding point of reference in evangelicalism's continuing reflection on Christian faith, life, and mission. The Declaration says of itself: "It is commended to God's people everywhere as an expression of evangelical commitment and as a resource for study, reflection, prayer, and evangelistic outreach." All of God's people—oldline, evangelical, Orthodox, Catholic—should receive the Amsterdam Declaration in the spirit in which it is commended. It is a historic contribution to the renewal of historic Christian orthodoxy.

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Churches stand ready to help in times of crisis. Or so one may think. The Barna Research Group telephoned 3,764 Protestant churches nationwide and in 40 percent of the calls were not able to get through to anyone, even after calling back as many as twelve times. Half of the churches in the 40 percent did not even have an answering machine. Schedule your crises for eleven o'clock Sunday morning.

■ Of course it is not representative of academic theology today. But it does say something not unimportant about what the academy and its publishing arms, in this case Routledge, deem worthy of serious attention. The book is *Indecent Theology* and the author is Marcella Althaus-Reid of the University of Edinburgh. Herewith the catalogue précis: "Examining the dialectics of decency and indecency and exploring a theology of sexual stories from the margins is the focus of *Indecent Theology*. For the first time, liberation theology, queer theory, post-Marxism, and postcolonial analysis are brought together in an explosive mixture. This is an out of the closet style of doing theology and shows how we can reflect on the Virgin Mary and on Christology through sexual stories taken from fetishism, leather lifestyles, and transvestism. It is based on the sexual experiences of the poor, using economic and political analysis while unveiling the sexual ideology of systematic theology." Explosive, as in laughter, or tears.

■ Michael Ignatieff is a writer and thinker of rare talents. His 1998 biography, *Isaiah Berlin: A Life*, is a masterwork of insight and style that I have warmly recommended. Reviewing recently *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices* by Elazar Barkan (Norton), Ignatieff writes: "A troubling question for any society, but especially a capitalist one, is what money can and cannot buy. We are all supposed to know that money can buy you sex but not love, power but not respect, and flattery but not self-esteem. Even in capitalist societies—which

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are supposed to know the price of everything and the value of nothing—it turns out that the most important things in life are still understood as goods that cannot be bought and sold without reducing their value to zero. If this is true, then what are we to think when a community or an individual has lost honor, dignity, and respect as a result of some crime or injustice, and the offending community or individual offers money by way of restitution? If honor and dignity cannot be bought and sold, can their loss be compensated with money? At first sight, most people would answer no. And more than no. If you were a victim you would think: they have persecuted, abused, and dispossessed me. Now they offer me money. Who do they think I am? And who do they think they are?" That strikes me as exactly right. But then Ignatieff turns around and writes: "Yet the past, however painful, must be faced, and wrongs must be paid for. And societies that do so—and pay the debt—are healthier and more decent places for doing so. Victims who have received the formal recognition and acknowledgment provided by restitution can look themselves in the mirror." Yes, look themselves in the mirror and say, "Who do they think I am? And who do they think they are?" I have written in this space about "Grasping for Gold" (November 1998), especially in the case of lawyers exploiting the Holocaust, and have commended Abe Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League and others who protest the unseemliness of those who play the guilt game for their own enrichment, with little or no benefit to those who suffered the crimes for which restitution is demanded. (See also William D. Rubinstein's review of *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* by Norman G. Finkelstein, FT, December 2000.) There are wrongs in the past, usually the more immediate past, that can be righted, at least in part, and what can be done should be done. But extorting financial payoffs from fictive perpetrators of distant wrongs is but another wrong. In his biography, Ignatieff writes that Isaiah Berlin was fond of quoting Joseph Butler, the eighteenth-century Bishop of Durham: "Things and actions are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be: Why then should we desire to be deceived?" That wisdom, Ignatieff says, was key to Berlin's sense of tragedy and historical limits. Why indeed should we desire to be deceived into thinking that the extortion of blood money from descendants with national or racial ties to people who did great wrongs that cannot be undone will set anything to moral rights? That is a regression to the superstitions of a tribalistic past, a past that began to be consigned to the past with the words of Jeremiah:

> And it shall come to pass that as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring evil, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the Lord. In those days they shall no longer say: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."
>
> But every one shall die for his own sin; each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

■ An alumnus of a Catholic university (which, perhaps tellingly, advertises itself as a "Jesuit university") writes to the president, asking why a prominent pro-abortion politician, now retired from the U.S. Senate, is invited to give the commencement address. The president writes in response that he "did not think it was necessary" to review the man's voting record, and "to the best of my knowledge the Senator has not been vocal or visible in the abortion debate at least since his retirement from the U.S. Senate." In fact, the politician has continued to state publicly his support for the unlimited abortion license of *Roe v. Wade.* But the university president's argument would seem to be that, since the Senator is not now making a big deal about his abortion position, why should the university? If, my correspondent wants to know, the Catholic Church teaches that abortion is an unspeakable crime, the greatest violation of human dignity in our time, and the engine of what John Paul II calls the culture of death, and if one presumes, as one should, that the priest president of a Catholic university agrees with the Church's teaching, how can such a university publicly honor a nationally prominent proponent of the abortion regime without giving the impression that abortion really does not matter that much? I am afraid I did not have a very satisfactory answer.

■ Apropos the recent comment on the *New York Times* co-opting the turf previously occupied by "alternative" newspapers, national political correspondent Richard Berke, a longtime member of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA), recently addressed a meeting of the association in Washington, D.C.: "This is at a newspaper where not so long ago—when I started there fifteen years ago—they were keeping lists—the department heads were asking for lists of the gay reporters on different sections so they could be punished in different ways. . . . I remember coming and wondering if there were any gay reporters there or whatever. Now it's like, there are times when you look at the front-page meeting and . . . literally three-quarters of the people deciding what's on the front

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page are not-so-closeted homosexuals. . . . It is a real far cry from what it was like not so long ago." Considering his audience, Mr. Berke may be exaggerating somewhat, but the evidence delivered each morning at the doorstep strongly supports his observation that the old lady has come a long way.

■ A survey of 5,603 adults discovers that the religious mainline is very mainline. Or, as the *Christian Century* puts it, "The study found the causes advocated by mainline groups are the issues the public cares the most about." Examples given are racial reconciliation, environmental protection, and concern for the poor. The social scientists, led by Robert Wuthnow of Princeton, discovered that the great majority of people say they favor those good things. Religious people, says Wuthnow, "are not only focused on abortion or prayer in schools. Progressive issues do seem to be of enormous importance to people." I don't know how much this survey cost, but one wonders if the money might not have been better spent on a jar of really good spikenard.

■ A reader writes that her life and her marriage were transformed by Joseph B. Stanford's article, "Sex, Naturally" (FT, November 1999). She writes, she says, not to persuade anyone of the evils of contraception but to encourage others to explore the possibility of natural family planning. She also suggests it might be helpful if we alerted readers to the information about NFP available from the Couple to Couple League International (P.O. Box 111184, Cincinnati, Ohio, or www.ccli.org). We just did.

■ Members of the attentive public, meaning almost all readers of these pages, can hardly not have come across references to Robert Putnam's article, now expanded into a book of the same title, *Bowling Alone* (Simon & Schuster, 541 pp., $26). The argument is that there has been a severe decline in "social capital" as, to cite one of numerous evidences, people bowling alone rather than in leagues. Putnam is alarmed, and not a little alarmist, at the signs of an "ominous plunge in social connectedness," a "civic decay," and a "virus of civic disengagement." In social science, philanthropic, and think tank worlds, Putnam and his thesis is all the "buzz." Timothy Burns of Skidmore College is skeptically cool. Writing in *Philanthropy*, Burns suggests that Putnam's idea of community and civic life is a pretty limp thing. "This kind of civic life entails nothing morally demanding, merely a disposition to do anything that is done with others. Above all, any active and involved ties must be to strangers, and will entail a loosening of ties to one's nearest and dearest. This is the second meaning of Putnam's title: he likes league bowling because it requires 'regular participation with a *diverse* set of acquaintances.' The central teaching of the work, in fact, is a distinction between two types of social capital: 'bonding' and 'bridging.' Bridging social capital is a 'concern for the generalized other,' while bonding is a thicker or deeper concern with one's close friends. Bridging is flexible, relaxed; bonding entails deep loves and aversions. While bonding social capital 'bolsters our narrower selves,' bridging social capital links one to distant acquaintances—it 'can generate broader identities.' Forms of bonding social capital like the family may have 'positive externalities,' but since they are exclusivist or unfriendly to outsiders, they are at odds with 'bridging' social capital, and so they are essentially worrisome, even dangerous. The end of our associational life is apparently not trustworthiness, sense of obligation, virtue, or wisdom, but merely moderation understood as tolerance." In fact, in Putnam's view, community that really matters, as in mattering ultimately, is deeply suspect. "For whatever their 'positive externalities,' orthodox or devout believers as such are limited, as Putnam never tires of reminding his readers, in what they can do for 'social connectedness,' and even pose a serious threat to 'bridging' social capital. Like a criminal gang, they are a form of social capital with 'bad external effects' or 'out-group antagonisms.' Their 'cohesive nonethnic communities' are, to some mainline Protestants, 'exclusivist' in character. They don't 'reach out' to 'the wider community.' Or rather, they do, but by building a political community that sustains faith and virtue. To Putnam and mainline Protestants, the deep concern that the devoutly religious have about the souls of their fellow citizens is wrong, unprogressive, disrespectful of personal autonomy, intolerant. The devoutly religious, it seems, are guilty of 'drawing both social and religious boundaries.' Still worse, they are guilty of being too concerned about prayer, about reverence for God—of being 'focused more on individual piety' than on 'progressive social betterment programs' or 'community projects.' They are the cause of the growing divide in American society. They must become lukewarm, progressive, tolerant of all things." Shelving the convictions and aspirations that make you who you are is a high price to pay for renewing Putnam's idea of social capital. "Having eschewed appeals to our longings for the noble and substituted appeals to dry, cold duty (or 'organized altruism'), Putnam would ensure that the demands of the new, identity-transcending connectedness will be made exciting and appealing by including new, innovative, fun things that will keep engagement 'relevant' or

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'meaningful,' especially to young people. Philanthropists are asked to fund participatory cultural activities 'from group dancing to songfests to community theater to rap festivals.' And if your identity tells you there's something wrong with the song? Putnam won't hear of it. 'Singing together does not require shared ideology or shared social or ethnic provenance.' In Putnam's America, an Orthodox rabbi would join with Madonna in a new 'The Ballad of the Green Berets.'" Current interest in "communitarianism"—to which Peter Berger and I are regularly said to have contributed with our writing on mediating institutions, beginning some twenty years ago—is, all in all, an encouraging development. Regrettably, current forms of communitarianism make a little god of community per se. As with happiness, aiming relentlessly at community is the surest way to miss it. Real community, the kind of community that Putnam and others tend to fear, is the result of commitment to the deepest things that those outside the community do not share. It is to be found, for instance, among those who are more interested in storing up treasure in heaven than in increasing social capital.

■ You have heard it said, probably more times than you can remember, that more than one-half of marriages today end up in divorce. It isn't true, as I've pointed out here before. (Why don't they listen?) It's a statistic regularly employed by those who want us to believe that marriage is a dysfunctional and outmoded institution. Now David Blankenhorn of the Institute for American Values has worked through the intimidating literature of the numbers-crunchers and explains how the statistic gained currency. The details are available in the Summer 2000 issue of *Propositions*, the Institute's newsletter. The gist of it is that divorce rates peaked in 1979 and have been declining ever since. For a young couple getting married today the statistical probability of their staying together for life is at least 60 percent. And it may be higher, since the statistics include all marriages and divorces, and it is established that second and third marriages are more divorce-prone than first marriages. Why does the "more than half" claim continue to have currency? Blankenhorn answers, "Mostly, I suspect, because today's aging baby boomers, who divorce so frequently themselves, find it hard to accept the fact that younger people are behaving differently, and better." Also, I would add, because moralizers love doleful statistics showing that we're going the wrong way in a handbasket. In any event, Blankenhorn offers this proposition, which he admits is a mix of evidence and hope: "In a few years, we will understand a divorce rate of 'more than half' not as a description of current reality, but as something that happened in the old days, when the sexual revolution was young and when today's pot-bellied commentators, editors, and divorce lawyers were wearing bellbottoms and going to discos." And, of course, young people at the altar who have their minds on statistical probabilities rather than on their love for one another sustained by the grace of God shouldn't be there.

■ Ireland is racing to catch up with Western Europe in the race toward secularization. Or so it seems to many observers. The Archbishop of Dublin, Desmond Connell, has a different view. He says that "hostility fatigue" will inevitably overtake the current fashion of Church-bashing. The children of today, he says, are being better formed spiritually and do not have the "reactions and resentments" of their elders. One must hope that he is right about that.

■ We told you so. That's the gist of an editorial in the *Church of England Newspaper* reacting to the Vatican declaration *Dominus Iesus*. The editors are critical of Anglican ecumenists for paying too much attention to Rome and neglecting relations with other Protestants. In the editors' gross misreading (assuming they read it) of the declaration, Rome has now told the Anglicans to get lost. The editorial concludes: "Rome has spoken: Is it now time for our Anglican ecumenists actually to hear this message, and begin to take Protestant communions more seriously, rather than treating them as Rome treats us?" Yes, they should hear the message, and yes they should take Protestant communions more seriously, precisely by treating them as Rome treats the Anglicans and everyone else. Namely, by speaking the truth in love, and, as John Paul II says, in "irrevocable commitment" to Christian unity.

■ Sometimes it's better to let sleeping dogs lie. But in trying to refute charges in the London *Times* that the Russian Orthodox Church is riddled with corruption, Father Vsevolod Chaplin, official spokesman of the Moscow Patriarchate, went further and denied long-standing claims that the Patriarch of Moscow, Aleksi II, was an agent of the KGB during the Soviet era. This was too much for the Keston Institute, the foremost research agency on religion in Communist and post-Communist areas. They have now reissued the documentation, long known to scholars, showing that Aleksi was recruited in Estonia when he was twenty-nine years old, and was considered a most valuable agent. In February 1988, thirty years after his recruitment, he was given an award by the KGB for his faithful service. When, for instance, the monks of

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the Pochayev monastery in western Ukraine complained of harsh treatment by the KGB, including the beating to death of one monk, Aleksi was sent to do "educational work" among the monks. In 1982, the fourth department of the KGB Fifth Directorate, which was responsible for religious affairs, boasted that through "leading agents, the Russian Orthodox Church, Georgian, and Armenian churches hold firmly to positions of loyalty [to the Soviet State]." All this is pretty sordid, but Keston notes that "Aleksi's collaboration was nothing exceptional." Almost all senior leaders of all officially recognized religious groups were recruited as KGB agents, says Keston. The Keston report concludes: "In view of the compelling evidence that Aleksi was recruited as a KGB agent, it remains a mystery why such a senior figure in the Moscow Patriarchate would deny it rather than initiate a serious debate as to whether such collaboration had been inevitable and whether or not it had caused the Russian Orthodox Church or others any harm." Since the fall of communism there has been much speculation as to whether such collaboration and other guilty secrets play an important part in the rejection of John Paul II's overtures to the Orthodox churches formerly under the Soviet regime. It is time for these questions to be aired more openly, always remembering that those of us who were not there cannot know what we would have done were we in their circumstance.

■ Hannah Arendt once described totalitarianism as "an experiment against reality." The totalitarian impulse, she said, is driven by a curious mix of radical skepticism and fanatical faith. It fosters a world in which people believe, at the same time, everything and nothing. The reigning dogma is that everything is possible and nothing is true. The argument that socialism is an experiment against reality and therefore bound to fail is also at the heart of John Paul II's 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. Roger Kimball takes *Experiments Against Reality* as the title of his admirable new book of essays (Ivan R. Dee, 351 pp., $28.50). Kimball's book is in some ways similar to Paul Johnson's *Intellectuals*, but he reads texts more closely and his criticism never descends to slash and burn polemics. The pleasure in reading Kimball is not simply in the demolition of bad guys but in the joy of learning things worth knowing. The essay on Nietzsche, for example, fully recognizes how wrongheaded, and even mad, was the genius, but also acknowledges the perverse nobility of his effort to reestablish morality on a ground firmer than that offered by what he viewed as an exhausted Christian tradition. He argues convincingly that Nietzsche is poorly served by the bargain-rate nihilists who today misrepresent his legacy under the postmodernist slogans du jour. Incisive, too, is the chapter on John Stuart Mill, in which Kimball makes a strong case that intolerance of an authoritarian, if not totalitarian, nature is clearly implicit in the argument of *On Liberty*. Mill's "one very simple principle" that the liberty of others can be constrained only for reasons of self-protection is premised, by his own account, on everybody agreeing on his "rational" conclusions, at which point politics (the deliberation of how we ought to order our life together) effectively comes to an end. Today the "one very simple principle" flourishes under the banner of political correctness, which is a mild form (well, not always so mild) of what John Paul in the same encyclical describes as the "thinly disguised totalitarianism" that is the result of divorcing democracy from truth. There are nineteen essays in all, including the influence of T. S. Eliot today, the connections between aestheticism and decadence in nineteenth-century romanticism, the contemporary cult surrounding Michel Foucault's love affair with death, the achievement of Muriel Spark, and why Robert Musil, author of *The Man Without Qualities*, was a man of qualities worth emulating. Kimball's literary and cultural criticism is not in the attack mode, at least not usually. His is rather a learned and gracefully articulated exploration into the ideas and fashions that have brought us to where we are. The tone is one of puzzlement, exasperation, and occasional anger, but the purpose is always to try to understand. Of recent books on the derangement of those who control the commanding heights of culture, and there is a growing number of such books, few can match *Experiments Against Reality* for its incisive critique, mordant temper, and intellectual reach.

■ Readers who are desperately determined to stay in step with the living language of a decadent culture will want to take note of an item in the *Journal of Legal Education*, titled "Using Students as Discussion Leaders on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues in First-Year Courses." This from the opening paragraph: "One of the authors, Nyquist, is a nongay white biologically male law teacher. Ruiz is a heteroqueer evolved male (the now-antiquated term is 'transsexual') Hispanic law student. Smith is a gay white biologically male law student. Both Ruiz and Smith are active in the Les-Bi-Gay-Trans Caucus at the New England School of Law and have been involved in LBGT issues for many years." Footnote #1 explains further: "Ruiz prefers the term 'evolved male' to 'transsexual' as a description of his gender. He is a biological female who is in the process of aligning his body with his male gender identity. 'Heteroqueer'

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refers to Ruiz' sexual orientation; 'heterosexual' is too simple a term for his situation. 'Hetero' refers to Ruiz' attraction to women and 'queer' to his evolved-male status." Footnote 22 is also helpful: "For example, when Ruiz first arrived at the school, Nyquist and Smith identified him as a lesbian. In our initial planning session for the class, Ruiz corrected us: 'A lesbian is a biological woman who identifies herself as a woman and is sexually attracted to women. Although I have a woman's body and am attracted to women, I identify my gender as male. . . . The term I prefer, 'evolved male,' implies not only a physical transition, but also a personal journey, psychological growth, and a physical emergence. The term also serves to distinguish evolved males from biological males.'" Watch for new studies on the missing kinks in evolutionary theory.

■ Alec Guinness died some months ago. Olivier, Richardson, Gielgud, Guinness. And one searches for some other way to say an era has ended. I came across this in one of Guinness' several, and always engaging, memoirs, *Blessings in Disguise*, which includes the account of his being received into full communion with the Catholic Church. "On 24 March 1956, Father Clarke accepted my reconciliation with the Church, with tact and kindness, at St. Lawrence's, Petersfield. Like countless converts . . . I felt I had come home—'and known the place for the first time.'" And then this: "Back in London, I was walking up Kingsway in the middle of an afternoon when an impulse compelled me to start running. With joy in my heart, and in a state of almost sexual excitement, I ran until I reached the little Catholic church there (St. Anselm and St. Cecilia) which I had never entered before; I knelt, caught my breath, and for ten minutes was lost to the world. Coming out into the glare of day, mingling with sensible citizens on their lawful occasions, I wondered what on earth had possessed me and if I had become momentarily deranged. I decided that I was still fairly sane; that it had just been an unexpected, rather nonsensical, gesture of love."

■ In the December 2000 issue we published Adam Garfinkle's authoritative article ("That Lousy War") on what went wrong in Vietnam and what, in the future, we might get right from what went wrong. One effort at getting things right is Vietnam Charities, an American project in support of Sister Elizabeth, a Vietnamese nun, and other Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. Their special apostolate is working with abused girls and helping poor children who are excluded from government schools to get an education. To find out how you can help, contact Monique O'Driscoll at Vietnam Charities, 4038 Tennyson, Houston, Texas 77005 (713-667-3179; www.vietnamcharities.org).

■ You know about the churches of Canada (Anglican, Catholic, United) being sued into bankruptcy by legal sharks bringing thousands of cases of "cultural genocide." You know, that is, if you read it in the November 2000 issue ("From the Northern Front," Public Square). In the late nineteenth century, the churches contracted with the government to run residential schools that would teach Indian children the Christian gospel, among other things. Predictably, some suits (of which there are now over seven thousand) allege sexual and other abuses, but chiefly the charge is cultural genocide. The churches, especially the Anglican, are falling all over themselves to apologize for what they once thought was their mission, says Mark Steyn, writing in the London *Spectator*. "Onward, Christian soldiers, retreating into oblivion. As for 'cultural genocide,' if there's any going on these days, it's the genocide of the Britannic inheritance—in North America, in the Antipodes, in Blair's Britain. Only a generation or two back, governments thought they were doing native children a favor by teaching them the English language and the principles of common law and the great sweep of imperial history, that by doing so they were bringing young Indians and Inuit 'within the circle of civilized conditions.' It's only forty years ago, but that's one memory the government of Canada will never recover. No civilized society legislates retrospectively: if you pass a seat-belt law in 1990, you don't prosecute people who were driving without them in 1980. Likewise, we should not sue the past for noncompliance with the orthodoxies of the present."

■ The paper of the archdiocese of Baltimore reports on the declining number of priests and how they will have to be reassigned to make sure that essentials are attended to. A common enough story. Not to worry, however, a committee has been established. According to the paper, it is called the "Committee on the Allocation and Recruitment of Priests (CARP)." Acronymically speaking, one can understand why allocation precedes recruitment in the committee's name, but one hopes the committee knows which must have priority.

■ William Flynn of Tallahassee, Florida, says he appreciates my tolerance when it comes to what to end a sentence with. But he wants to test the limits of my tolerance with this: "Why did you bring that book I didn't want to be read to out of up for?" I'm thinking about it.

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■ Of course I'm prejudiced in favor of Father Avery Dulles. As I am prejudiced for and against many persons and things. Prejudice simply means that you've given a matter prior thought and arrived at a considered judgment. The alternative to prejudice is to be entirely open-minded, which is almost always a pretense, and, when it is not, is usually equivalent to mindlessness. I have given a great deal of thought to the person and work of Fr. Dulles. We've been good friends for a quarter century; he was my sponsor when I was received into the Catholic Church and my vesting priest when I was ordained a priest. He writes frequently for these pages, we're in regular conversation, often have dinner together, and the Institute's Dulles Colloquium, a continuing conversation among notable theologians, is named in his honor. All of which reflects a heavy-duty prejudice. The occasion for bringing it up is Fr. Dulles' newest book, *The New World of Faith* (Our Sunday Visitor, 175 pp., $14.95 paper). It is a wonder. Here is a man who is rightly considered the most respected Catholic theologian in America writing a book of utter lucidity and beguiling simplicity that invites the inquiring lay person to the high adventure of Christian faith as that faith is taught and lived in the Catholic Church. It should be read also by priests and catechists—and by academic theologians who want to see how erudition can be put in the service of people. Like many priests, I am besieged by inquirers. To those who want to know what the Church teaches on this or that, I recommend the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and I will still do that, of course. But the Catechism is very big, and can be intimidating to some. Now I will also be recommending *The New World of Faith*. As an adult convert, Fr. Dulles knows the questions that bother people most. He responds to those questions in a manner that is completely straightforward, modest, and persuasive. I can imagine that some readers may think the book a mite impersonal, but, having discovered the inexhaustible marvels of the faith, Fr. Dulles is reluctant to let his own ideas get in the way of communicating that discovery to others. Anyone who has a say in what books are acquired for a parish or school library and doesn't include a copy or three of *The New World of Faith* is guilty of dereliction of duty. Please take that as a statement of prejudice—prejudice carefully considered and once again confirmed.

■ There is a fetching bravado about Christians who make up their own creeds. Writing in *America*, William J. O'Malley, S.J., complains that Catholic catechesis is too much concerned about doctrine. "Risking imprisonment in Castel Sant'Angelo, I propose four non-negotiables of Christian faith catechesis—even if kids lack knowledge of the *filioque*, the symbols in the Book of Revelation, and the insights of Teilhard. 1) Jesus is the embodiment of God. Somehow, God came from beyond time and space to show us how it's done. 2) Jesus/God died in order to rise and show us that we are immortal and to share divine aliveness with us. 3) Those who belong to Jesus/God see the values of 'The Kingdom' (them first—God and neighbor) as more important than the values of 'The World' (me first). 4) We celebrate that incorporation in a serving community and a weekly meal of thanksgiving. Deny any of those and you can still be a fine human being—even a saint, like Camus—but not a Christian. To my fallible mind, everything else is, in varying degrees, negotiable." The author convincingly demonstrates the state of his mind, but one wonders if it is really the case (happy thought) that there are thousands of children out there worrying about the *filioque*. In any event, he need not fear imprisonment, although in a well-ordered order he might be sent back to Theology 101.

■ "The November election may well determine whether the religious clauses of the Constitution will continue to preserve and protect the values of religious freedom, diversity, and peace." Thus writes Norman Redlich of the American Jewish Congress in the *Nation*. You know my long-standing point, which I'm glad to say is being picked up in some legal writing, that there are not two clauses but one. Enough on that. But "religious" clauses? No, they (i.e., it) is not religious. It is the religion clause, a clause dealing with religion. Until a few years ago, journalists writing on religion were called religious reporters, until some objected that they were nothing of the sort. They are religion reporters. As to the substance of Mr. Redlich's comment, he is entirely right in his devotion to religious freedom, diversity, and peace, and, in my view, entirely wrong in his idea of how those great goods might be preserved and protected.

■ Even in these flush times, $22 billion is a hefty piece of change. That is how much evangelical Protestants spend annually in support of a vast array of parachurch groups, ranging from Campus Crusade for Christ, World Vision, and Prison Fellowship to countless evangelistic ministries. Michael S. Hamilton offers an instructive survey of the phenomenon in a *Christianity Today* article, "We're In the Money!" Along the way, he notes that giving to politically oriented organizations of the "Religious Right" is less than 1 percent of parachurch support. "For every dollar we spend on political agencies, we spend nearly $10 on international ministries, almost $13 in Christian book

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and music stores, nearly $25 on evangelical higher education, and almost $31 on evangelical elementary and secondary schools. We spend more on summer camps than politics, more on urban rescue missions than politics, more on youth programs than on politics." So has the success of the innumerable entrepreneurial empires of the parachurch world corrupted evangelicalism? Hamilton recognizes that being in the money is probably not what Jesus had in mind when he invited his disciples to take up the cross and follow him. He writes, "This particular Christian truth only rarely works its way into the decision-making process of our ministry organizations. The engine that drives us is a compelling vision for ministry, and who can say that the vision was not vouchsafed by God? So we pursue the vision by building and growing the organizations that embody the vision. Growth means more money; more money means more ministry. In the worst cases, means and ends become reversed, and growth and influence become goals unto themselves. In the best cases, more ministry means more people who become newly aware of the great gift God has given them in Jesus Christ—and who then, in gratitude, reach into their own pockets and give, so that others might also know." If only the world, and the religious world as well, was limited to "the best cases." What would seem to be missing here is a place to stand from which the driving, and sometimes demonic, logic of growth and success can be brought under judgment. I left the article wondering whether somebody might someday write a version of "The Grand Inquisitor" updated for the religion business of our day.

■ The Episcopal bishop John Shelby Spong has made his debut on the sex website www.theposition.com. His column is titled "Virgin Mary vs. Wonder Woman," and his point is that the comic strip character "has done more to break the culturally imposed boundaries on women than the Virgin Mary ever did." There is no reason whatever to take note of this, unless you are one of the few people who might be asked, "Whatever happened to that Bishop Spong?"

■ How long can you keep a scam going? In the case of Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC), as long as you can get leftist foundations to fund your campaign against the Catholic Church. As it regularly does come election time, CFFC once again took out a full-page ad in the *New York Times* in the name of a letterhead organization called "Catholics Speak Out." "There has been a lot of talk about the 'Catholic vote.' Now it is time for Catholic voters to talk. We agree with our bishops on many issues, but not all." Then follows a laundry list of sixteen liberal causes, beginning with universal health care and ending with lifting sanctions against Cuba and Iraq. Smack in the middle is "Reproductive Health," affirming support for the worldwide availability of measures to avoid reproduction. In the tiniest type, there is a list of what must be thousands of names of people who presumably support "Catholics Speak Out." "Anonymous" appears several times, and there is at least one "Father Anonymous." That's one way to speak out. Conversely, one recalls the full-page fundraising ad of some years ago taken out by a ditzy California priest who promoted moon worship and sundry less interesting heresies. He had been censured by his order, and his ad screamed the banner headline, "I HAVE BEEN SILENCED!" The anonymous speak out and the silenced hire a public relations firm. Are we living in wonderful times, or what?

■ Attention was paid when former President Jimmy Carter, with great reluctance, resigned from the Southern Baptist Convention in protest against what he viewed as its increasingly narrow conservative direction. Technically he did not resign, since he still belongs to an SBC local church where he is very active in, inter alia, teaching Sunday School. But Carter made his point. Dr. Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School, an SBC conservative in good standing, and one of the more impressive theologians around today, says that some SBC leaders may respond to Carter's decision with "Good riddance!" Not Dr. George, however. He thinks Carter has a point well worth making. He writes, "Especially troubling right now are isolationist forces within the denomination, some of whom oppose Baptist efforts even with other evangelicals. Combined with nativist politics and a virulent anti-Catholicism, this movement would actually restrict the missionary and evangelistic outreach at the heart of the Southern Baptist ethos. If left to grow like kudzu, it could reduce the Southern Baptist Convention to a mega-sect."

■ Among the little-noticed contributions of the Clinton Administration is National Character Counts Week, solemnly declared by presidential proclamation two weeks before the election. William Jefferson Clinton declared: "The term 'character' is derived from an ancient Greek word meaning 'to inscribe,' reflecting the conviction that character is not innate, but rather is instilled through the influence, example, and guidance of the people around us. One of our greatest responsibilities as

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adults and citizens, therefore, is to ensure that we teach our children, by word and deed, the values that will help them develop into men and women of strong character." The proclamation goes on to note the Administration's support for the V-chip in new televisions, and that "exercising our right to vote" is "a vital lesson about character." So, you ask, where is the aforementioned contribution of the Clinton Administration? It is no little thing to have retired, at least for the foreseeable future, the term chutzpah.

■ Lawyers are supposed to be tenacious, and Kenneth B. Kramer is certainly that. He was my tenacious Greek teacher at Concordia College, Austin, Texas, many years ago. He now practices law in Wichita Falls and has been tenaciously challenging my commentary on the Elian Gonzalez seizure in the June/July issue. I wrote, "What law warranted the raid? None. What was the hurry in removing the boy? The hubris of a government wanting to save face by doing what it said it would do." I give up. Well, almost. Mr. Kramer notes that the Immigration and Naturalization Service had a "right of possession" that no one has challenged in court. Fair enough. So let's stipulate, as lawyers say, that the government had the legal authority to do what it did. But does that warrant—in the sense of morally justifying—what it did and how it did it? I think not.

■ What difference is "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" (ECT) really making? That is the question addressed by the noted evangelical theologian, Stanley J. Grenz, in the conclusion of his new book, *Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era* (Baker). Evangelicalism—characterized by an emphasis on the experience of conversion that Grenz calls "convertive piety"—emerged as "neo-evangelicalism" after World War II, breaking out of its religious and cultural isolationism dating back to the early part of the century. Today, evangelicalism is flourishing by many measures, but, Grenz argues, is crippled by the lack of a coherent ecclesiology, or doctrine of the Church. Grenz writes: "Whatever else might be said about the ECT document and the debate that came in its wake, the ordeal has awakened the evangelical consciousness to several urgent issues that few evangelicals had considered at length prior to 1994. Above all, the discussion has jarred at least some evangelicals into considering the question of the breadth of vision that characterizes neo-evangelicalism after more than a half century of existence. The initial intent of the neo-evangelical movement was to provide a 'third way' in the aftermath of the great turn-of-the-twentieth-century controversy [between modernists and fundamentalists] within Protestantism. But the events since 1994 signal that the postmodern, global context has thrust upon the purveyors of convertive piety a new situation. No longer can evangelicals be content to limit the context in which they engage in the task of renewal to a church understood as bounded by the oldline Protestant denominations and the self-consciously evangelical groups. While not abandoning this aspect of their mandate, the postmodern condition challenges evangelicals to gain a vision of the church that is truly catholic, that is, a vision that is universal and comprehensive in scope. The globalized situation thrusts upon evangelicals the need to understand themselves as a catholic renewal movement, as a people committed to the renewal of the evangelical center within, as part of, and for the sake of the whole, global church." Of course Grenz wrote that before the "Amsterdam Declaration 2000," discussed elsewhere in these pages, but he and the Amsterdam assembly would seem to be of one mind. One might even suspect the Holy Spirit of having a hand in this.

■ Monsignor George G. Higgins is the last of the breed known as "labor priests." It is flattering, but also a mite annoying, that he has over the years, in column after column, attacked the relatively little I have had occasion to say about organized labor. More than annoying is his essay in *Commonweal* citing a recent interview on the late Cardinal O'Connor, in the course of which I said that organized labor "was one of the few areas in which we did not see eye to eye." Higgins writes: "Neuhaus never publicly spoke this way about the Cardinal's stand on labor issues while the Cardinal was alive. I think it is a great pity that he held his fire until it was too late for O'Connor to respond." That is both false and offensive. The Cardinal was well aware of my public statements on the labor question and of our differing views on aspects of that question. My most extensive discussion of these matters is in the 1992 book, *Doing Well and Doing Good: The Challenge to the Christian Capitalist*, which the Cardinal praised highly, while not agreeing with all of it. The Cardinal made no secret of the fact that his passionate support for organized labor was part of his filial devotion to his father, a staunch union man of the old-fashioned type so often idealized by Msgr. Higgins. My friendship with the Cardinal was of the kind that accommodated respectful disagreement, as I hope is also true of my relationship with Msgr. Higgins, even when he makes it difficult. There is no doubt that Catholic social doctrine affirms the right of workers to join unions. Rather than spending his time misrepresenting those with whom he disagrees,

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Msgr. Higgins might attend to his unenviable task of explaining why fewer and fewer working people choose to exercise that right.

■ Readers who are sated by commentary on the presidential election and its aftermath will note with gratitude that this issue is an election-free zone. It is not that we think the election unimportant, but a journal such as this examines events from a certain historical perspective, so we will have nothing to say about the election until next month. From the peanut gallery: "One month is historical perspective?!" Just kidding.

■ Managing Editors manage, and there is a great deal to manage around this place. For ten years, Matthew Berke has been smoothing the feathers of ruffled authors, keeping the log on what's on hand and what's promised, compelling other editors to stay on deadline (including what seems like a daily reminder to this editor that "We need 'The Public Square' for next month"), and making sure that everyone from printer to proofreaders are on the same page and watching the same calendar. Whatever the confusions in this office, and there are many of them, the standard response has been, "Check it with Matt." And now Matt has decided it is time to move on. We'll miss him for all he does, and we'll miss him almost as much for things not included in the Managing Editor's job description; most notably, a wry and gentle humor worthy of Gary Larson's "The Far Side," which he keeps by his desk. The "Berkisms" offered in editorial meetings are legendary. His humor fails him only in his fanatical devotion to the New York Yankees. Matt came to us after completing his Ph.D. at Yale, where he wrote his dissertation on Reinhold Niebuhr, a figure very important to the philosophy of this journal. As a commitedly Jewish Niebuhrian, Matt has in numerous ways enhanced the interreligious dimension of our enterprise. Now he wants to devote himself full-time to scholarship and writing, which is perfectly understandable, and that will, we very much hope, include regular writing for these pages. Heartfelt thanks for these ten years, Matt. We pray you all the best in your new endeavors. And, setting aside for the moment more sensible allegiances, we will try hard not to begrudge you your hope for ten more years, at least, of World Series dominance by the insufferable Yankees.

■ Gratifying. That is the word, when students from the U.S. and Central Eastern Europe stay in touch through FT and support one another in their vocations, including, over these past ten years, many vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life. One of the great benefits of the Tertio Millennio Seminar held in Krakow, Poland, and generously supported by the Laffey-McHugh Foundation of Delaware, Maryland, is that young people in dominantly Catholic countries get to know Protestant and Orthodox Christians of high intelligence and commitment. Gratifications abound. For instance, the chaplain to the New York Yankees tells me that he frequently uses FT in his talks, and at least one team member is a regular reader, which may or may not have something to do with their winning their third World Series in a row. Of course, gratifications of this order cannot be guaranteed, but we will be happy to send a sample issue of this journal to people you think are likely subscribers. Please send names and addresses to FIRST THINGS, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, New York 10010 (or e-mail to subscriberservices@pma-inc.net). On the other hand, if they're ready to subscribe, call toll-free 1-800-783-4903, or visit www.firstthings.com.

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these three realities were not separated in real life. . .and they can never be dissociated. . . the word of God and culture together give the soul an appetite for a happiness which will be fully satisfied only in eternity. ***Faith and literature*** *instead of satiating the Christian, stimulate his thirst for God, his eschatological desire,* ***to create in him an urgent need for total beauty, to indicate the direction in which to look for its fulfillment. . .***

--Jean LeClercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*

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